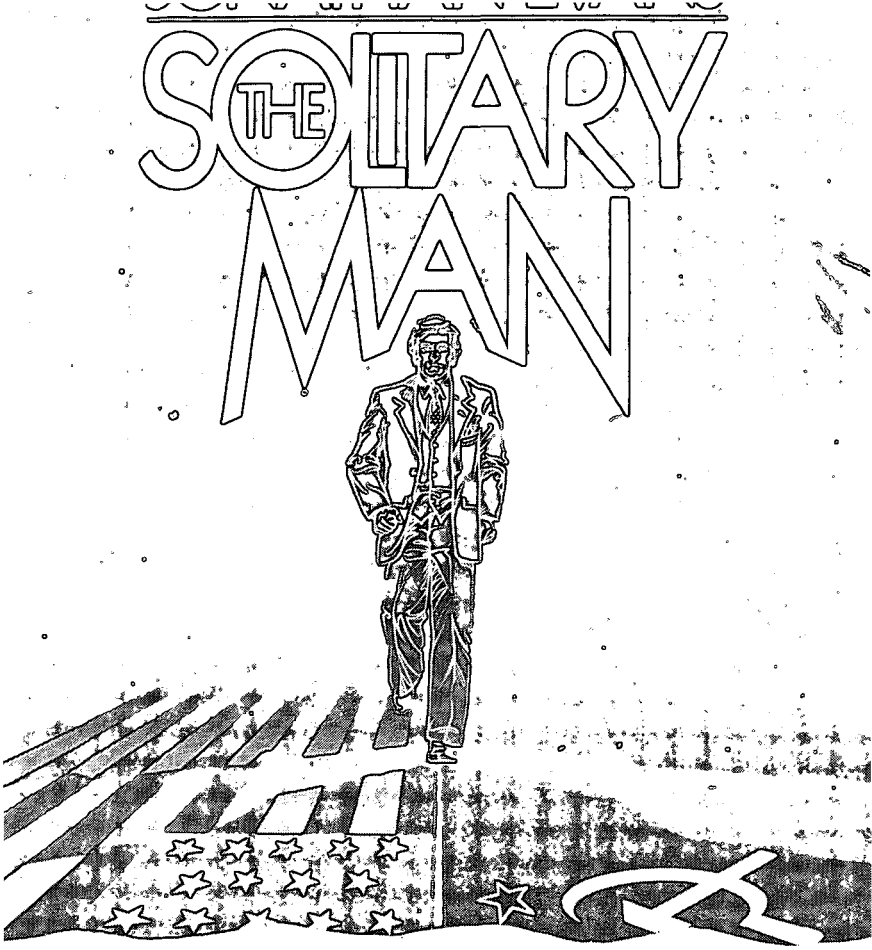


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EDITOR'S NOTES

by Cathleen Jordan

Every so often, one of AHMM's readers writes to ask why we don't publish the *complete* solutions to the puzzles in the Unsolved column—that is, why we don't show how the puzzle was worked out, step by step. There is an air of grim frustration about some of those letters, one we understand thoroughly, having known what it is to be stumped by such a puzzle. Printing the complete solution is clearly the preferable thing for us to do from the puzzle-worker's standpoint; there are, however, other considerations we must take into account.

One such consideration is space. The complete solutions often take up at least a page, sometimes two or three—pages we don't usually have to spare. For example, let's look at the puzzle in the last issue. (The solution in its regular format is given elsewhere in the magazine, as indicated on the Contents page, but what follows is the working out of Part I provided by its author, George J. Summers.) Those of you who didn't try to solve it are going to be left out of the present discussion, we're afraid—our apologies for writing about something that must necessarily be mystifying, but we can't reprint the puzzle here. The best we can do is to say that it involved four men at a table in a restaurant. One of the four—Doyle—was poisoned during the meal, and a series of statements by the survivors and the detective provided the clues to the murderer's identity, statements that had much to do with who was sitting where. The numbers in brackets below refer to them.

Herewith, then, the solution.

PART I

If [6] is false, then Clark did not poison Doyle and statements [1] through [4] are true, from [7]. Then the seating arrangement (using the first letter of each name) was

A
B D
C

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- Neil Diamond: Jazz Singer 32877
- Oak Ridge Boys: Gt. Hits 44417
- John Cougar: American Fool 40331
- Van Halen: Diver Down 44205
- Bellamy Bros.: Gt. Hits 04770
- Rick Springfield: Living Oz 53844
- A Flock Of Seagulls: Listen 33905
- Lionel Richie 44354
- Rubinstein: Beethoven Con. 5 24408
- K. Rogers: We've Got Tonight 34557
- Quarterflash: Another Picture 33973
- John Denver: It's About Time 24563
- Triumph: Never Surrender 53938
- Sylvia: Snapshot 14747
- Rush: Moving Pictures 43915
- Best Beach Boys 23946
- Hank Williams, Jr.: Gt. Hits 34553
- Elton John: Too Low Zero 10196
- The Who: It's Hard 54190
- Crosby/Stills/Nash: Allies 43977
- Eagles: Gt. Hits, V 2 63318
- C. Twitty: Lost Feeling 10202
- Pat Benatar: Get Nervous 14616
- Hooked on Swing 04722
- Statler Bros.: Today 33753
- Stevie Nicks: Bella Donna 43739
- J. Geils: Showtime 13346
- Led Zeppelin: Coda 33759
- Best Best Merle Haggard 33505
- Chris Cross: Another Page 34400
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and, from [2] and [4] respectively, Brent and Alden are innocent. From [8], this situation is impossible.

So [6] is true. Statements [1] and [5] cannot both be true; so from [6] and [7] either Alden or Clark is guilty, and [3] and [4] are true. From [3] and [4], the seating arrangement was one of the following:



In the first arrangement, since [4] is true, Alden is innocent; so from [6] and [7] Alden told the truth. But [1] is not true for this arrangement, so this arrangement is impossible.

In the second arrangement, since [4] is true, Clark is innocent; so from [6] and [7] Clark told the truth. But [5] is not true for this arrangement, so this arrangement is impossible.

The third arrangement must be the correct one, because it is the only one possible. Since [4] is true, Alden is innocent. Then *Clark must have poisoned Doyle.*

From [6] and [7], Alden told the truth. So the truth of [1] is consistent with the seating arrangement and the truth of [2] is consistent with Brent's established innocence. Then [5] must be false, from [7]. That [5] is false is consistent with the seating arrangement.

The author has begun, as you can see, by determining whether the detectives's two statements mean that we have (a) one liar and one poisoner—two separate people to keep an eye out for—or (b) one person who is both the poisoner and the only liar. That makes sense, of course, and is probably the most efficient way to begin. Since [6] turns out to be true, we know it's (b) and that we must look for inconsistency—for the liar in the bunch.

But for us, a problem has already arisen—and one that, to our minds, compounds the already considerable space problem. *The way the puzzle's author began wasn't the way we began.* It wouldn't be easy for us to use the above solution to figure out where we went wrong.

It must be kept in mind, by the way, that we are ordinary persons—not, that is, professional logicians—and we don't necessarily go at things like this in the optimum way (practically never, in fact). We did get the right answer, though.

For those of you in the same boat, who began, for instance, as we did, by drawing up a dia-

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gram of where Alden said everybody sat, and then looking at what Brent said on the subject, we could, of course, write up an alternate solution, a step by step account of our own way of working it out. But others may have had still other ways of beginning—and on top of that, since we're not logicians we would be apt to let an error creep in or a misleading statement. We think we're all much better off if we stay out of it.

A second consideration is that the author of the puzzle often doesn't *give* us anything but the final outcome. (Most of the puzzles, as you've probably noticed, are reprinted ones, and we are at the mercy of what has been provided.) To inflict our own puzzle-solving methods on others may not, you might agree, be particularly useful or desirable, but if we didn't do that in many cases, we would be forced into an aggravating inconsistency of sometimes providing a complete solution and sometimes not doing so.

So, all in all, it seemed best to us to save space (for stories), to avoid trying to be what we are not, and to opt, at the same time, for consistency.

Given the above, we'll all just have to muddle through together. We hope that's all right with most of you, and that with the final answer to "whodunit" you can go back and rework the puzzle should you have gotten it wrong, perhaps spotting for yourself where you allowed an inconsistency or an error. And that, in any case, it was fun having a shot at it.

The above solution to "The Square Table" by George J. Summers is taken from New Puzzles in Logical Deduction *by George J. Summers. © 1968 by George J. Summers, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, N.Y.*

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THE LEGACY

by Dan A. Sproul

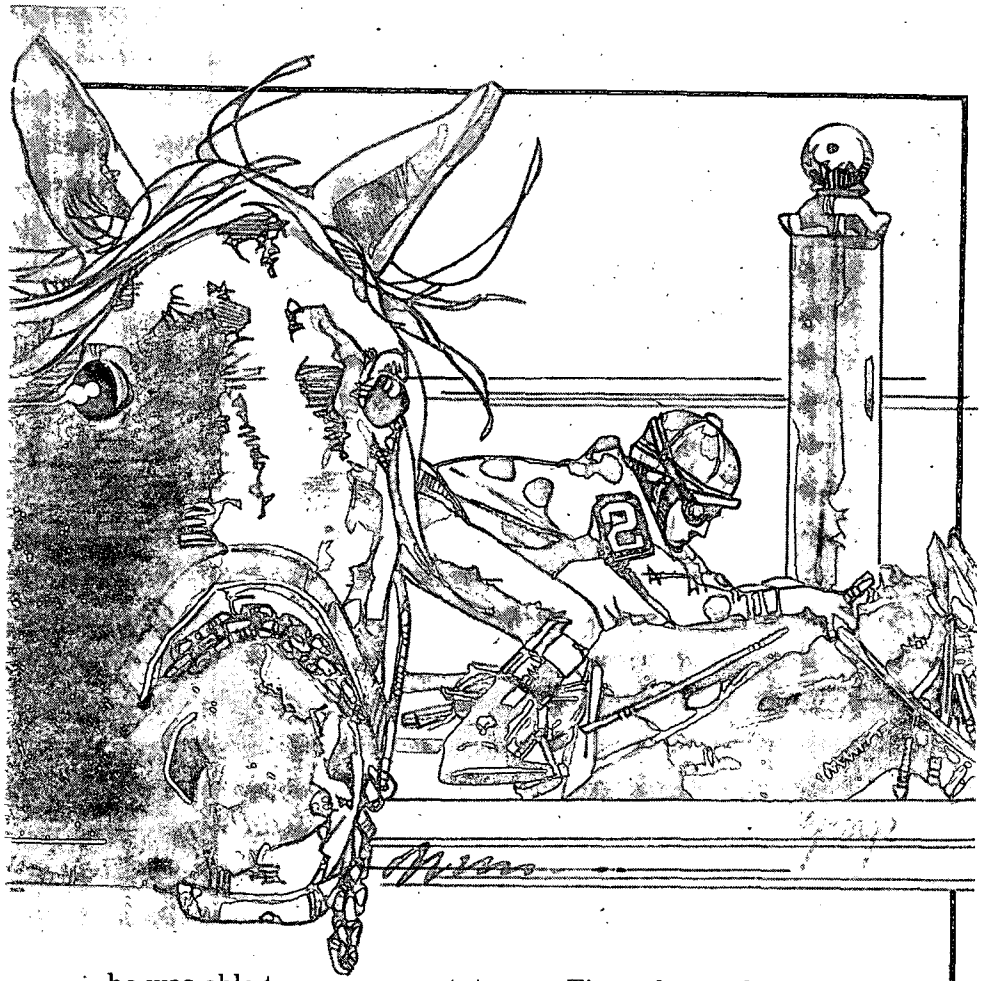
Sal De Costa was a horse-player. Not your ordinary weekend handicapper, mind you, but one obsessed with the play. Unlike many of his profession, he did not expire in some littered alleyway or at the bottom of the fabled East River, nor did he die broke as propriety would dictate.

He never married, he never established any close relationships. He did all things in moderation. He enjoyed no common vices save the racetrack, which remained his mistress, his job, his pleasure, his very existence throughout his life. He shunned house games, had never visited Las Vegas, and viewed jai alai and dog racing as fish fodder—sucker games.

Perhaps, under the circumstances, it was surprising that

Illustration by Arthur George

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he was able to amass an estate of some considerable worth. But then, Sal was an able horse-player as it turns out. And while he did not cultivate close friendships, he was imbued with unmitigated contempt for anyone unwilling or afraid to take a chance. As he was fond of pointing out, "Life is a gamble. No one ever got anywhere without taking a chance."

Time, the insidious enemy of all men, finally ran Sal De Costa to ground. In bed, in his sleep, at age seventy-three, Sal's ticker shortened stride and hung; thusly he passed on to wherever hundred dollar players go. He died unloved, unmourned, and unemployed, survived by no family member except for his long dead sister's child, Joe Moss.

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Joe Moss had occasion to meet his Uncle Sal only twice. When he was fourteen at his mother's funeral in New York, he and Uncle Sal matched nickels on the funeral parlor porch. Sal told him it would take his mind off his mother's death. Joe won forty-five cents. Sal moved to Florida a few years later.

Joe lived with his father, a Presbyterian minister. It was later in life before he fully understood why his father and the much maligned Sal never hit it off. Joe was working for a modest salary at a computer software company in New Jersey when his father went to his reward. Not long after that, Uncle Sal turned up again. He claimed to be in New York on vacation and invited Joe to join him for a day of racing at Belmont. Even before they arrived, Joe admitted his ignorance of betting and throughout the day was unwilling to make any frequent or sizeable wagers. Despite his uncle's urging and propitious advice, he remained reluctant, having little capital to risk.

It was to be the last time Uncle Sal came to visit. Nine years later, the last word of Uncle Sal arrived from his attorneys in Florida. They advised Joe Moss of his uncle's demise and requested his presence in Miami.

ANGSTRUM, BIGALOW AND BLUETT, LAW OFFICES it said on the door. Joe went inside, announced himself to the secretary. He was told to wait. After several minutes she informed him with a certain haughty disdain she reserved for common folk that Mr. Bluett would attend to him.

Roger Bluett met him at the doorway. Ruddy, jowled face, two hundred dollar suit, two hundred plus pounds, most of it just above and below the belt. Obviously he was unable to walk on water, which shattered the secretary's credibility in Joe's mind.

Bluett motioned him inside. He was apparently unaccustomed to standing or walking. He wasted little time in waddling back to his desk, there to perform a powerless plummet into a gaudily padded swivel chair, which he immediately wheeled up tight to his large desk.

"Well, how was your flight, Mr. Moss?"

Joe Moss took a chair, sidestepping the pleasantry.

"What's this all about anyway?"

"This," said Bluett, flipping a folder open, "is the last will and testament of your late uncle." He paused to turn some of the papers right side up. "You are the only named beneficiary, but it's rather a complicated situation."

"Can we get on with it? I told

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them at work I'd be back by tomorrow."

Bluett answered his impatience with a condescending chuckle. "I don't think you understand, Mr. Moss. We are concerned here with a rather large estate. Almost a million and a half dollars."

A pressure formed in Joe's abdomen. It then radiated outward as a tingling shiver throughout his extremities. It passed quickly, replaced by mild euphoria. Bluett's voice came blunted through a fog. Joe's total concentration centered on what he could do with that kind of money. He had figured on no more than a few thousand, if that. His uncle had always lived so modestly, an estate of this size had simply not occurred to him.

"I'm sorry," Joe interrupted. "What did you say?"

"We will have to wait about twenty minutes to read the will," Bluett repeated. "Until ten o'clock. Mr. Patton should be here by then."

Joe was puzzled. "I thought you said I was the sole beneficiary. Who is this Patton guy?"

"Well, technically you are the sole beneficiary, but there are conditions. Everything will be made clear to you at the reading."

Upon Patton's arrival, some six minutes early, Bluett stood, with no small effort, to state quite formally: "All the concerned parties being present, we can commence with the reading." He reshuffled the papers before him. "By the way, Mr. Moss, this is Jerry Patton. He is representing the Thoroughbred Owners League."

Patton was lean and angular, with high cheekbones. He reminded one of a fasting Jack Palance. Nodding a greeting to Joe, he seated himself in the remaining chair.

Bluett sat down and cleared his throat. "Let's see now. I'm going to dispense with all this 'sound mind' business." He read silently, moving his lips, eyes flitting back and forth across the document. "Here we are. 'To my sole living heir, Joseph Anthony Moss, I do bequeath my entire estate under the conditions herewith set forth. Said estate to be transferred in cash.'" Bluett peered up over his rimless eyeglasses. "Your uncle's estate consisted of some nine hundred eighty-seven thousand dollars in stock and other securities, ten racehorses, an eighty acre farm in Ocala, and his house in Miami. The stipulation is that all of the property be sold so that the estate will consist only of cash. However, you may take possession of the house here in Miami until it's sold at auction a week from today. The personal effects in the house will pass to

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you. But furniture and other appointments will be liquidated for cash and added to the estate. Is that clear?"

Joe acknowledged that it was.

"Now we come to the conditions," Bluett continued. He paused to flip several pages and suck annoyingly on his teeth. "Simply stated," he went on haltingly, obviously flustered by what he was about to reveal, " . . . that is to say, what it says here . . . In order for Mr. Moss to receive his inheritance, he must first pick the winner of a horse race."

"You got to be kidding," Joe blurted out.

Bluett held up his hand. "That's not all," he quickly added, as Joe squirmed in his chair, threatening to stand. "Let me read the rest, as set down by Mr. De Costa's own hand."

He began to read.

" 'During my lifetime I have found that the racetrack cultivates those qualities most useful to a man. If a man is to win, he does not have to beat the track. He need only best the other players. To do that, he must be sober, disciplined, dedicated, and have a sharp mind, and above all, he must stand or fall on his own decision. Therefore, it is not for the weak, the vacillating, or the easily influenced. I wish to ensure that my nephew has, or develops, the qualities I speak of. In order to facilitate this end, I set down these conditions: Within three racing days following the reading of this will, my nephew, Joseph Anthony Moss, must present to the law offices of Angstrum, Bigalow and Bluett, in the presence of an official of the Thoroughbred Owners League and a member of the aforementioned law firm, a written statement naming a winning horse at Hialeah Race Track, Gulfstream, or Calder Race Course, whichever is operating at the time of my demise. The written statement proclaiming the winning horse must be presented a minimum of one hour prior to post time on the day said race is to be run, and must state precisely the name of the horse, the number of the race, the name of the racetrack, and the date. The race results will be verified by the aforementioned law offices, and by the TOL representative. If the horse selected by my nephew wins the race, my entire estate will effectively be transferred to him at that time.

" 'If the horse he selects does not win the race, the estate is to be given over to the Thoroughbred Owners League, to be used by that organization as it sees fit. A sum equal to the amount of roundtrip air fare, New York to Miami, is to be given to my nephew to cover his expenses.' "

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Bluett laid the document on the desk. "There's some more technical material concerning the conversion of the estate, but that's the gist of it."

Joe's upbringing did not include any working knowledge of the racetrack, unless you count his visit to Belmont with Sal. He worried over how much he could learn in three days.

He requested and received a copy of the will. Bluett also gave him the address and key to Uncle Sal's house. Thus laden, he ambled out of the office building into the murderous Miami July heat. He waved at three cabs. Two drivers laughed, the other waved back at him. Patton tapped his shoulder.

"Can't get anywhere hailing cabs down here. You need to find a stand, near a big hotel or the airport. Something like that. I can give you a lift."

"No, thanks. I'll find my way."

Patton executed a one-armed shrug. "Look, kid. I'm not your enemy. The money goes into the TOL fund if you come up with the wrong horse. I don't get it personally."

"Yeah . . . I guess that's right. What the hell." He handed Patton the address. "You know where that is?"

Patton nodded. "North Miami, not far from the track. I live in Miramar. Right on the way. Come on, I'm just around the corner."

Patton drove a five-year-old LTD. He headed it west to pick up the Palmetto Expressway, mentioning to Joe that going that particular way beat fighting traffic up 27th Avenue. Joe didn't give a damn about the traffic and couldn't have cared less where he was, so he said nothing. After ten minutes of silence Patton asked the question Joe had explored fruitlessly and in depth.

"So what are you going to do?"

"Leave town poor, probably."

Patton deftly maneuvered around a stalled Cuban lunch wagon. "Maybe not," he said. "Favorites win about thirty percent of the time. You could get lucky."

"You mean I got about one chance in three?"

"Maybe better. There are strong favorites and some not so strong. Horses at even money or lower seem to win more than their share. Course, there ain't no sure things."

Joe figured if it came down to it, betting a strong favorite was one way to proceed. But it left a lot to chance. He kept reminding himself he was only going to get one shot.

Patton stopped in front of a rambling, single story cement block with awnings and trellises and a screened-in pool on the side.

"Nice joint," Patton observed.

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Nice, but modest compared to the neighbors', was Joe's assessment. He thanked Patton and got his stuff out of the car.

"If I can help you with anything, give me a call. I'm in the book." Patton waved and was gone.

The key fit and the door opened. He checked the refrigerator, plenty of food. What he needed was a drink. He put ice in a tall tumbler and began a systematic search for the booze. Zero. Cooking sherry, that was it. Not even a beer. He poured three or four ounces of wine over the ice. He downed it grimly. There was a half bottle of ginger ale. It was almost flat, but it smothered the melted plastic taste of the wine when he tossed number two down. Then the phone rang.

"Hello?"

Silence.

"Who is this?" Joe asked.

The voice sounded old. "What? You want I should guess who you is?"

"I know who I am. Who the hell are you?"

"Knows who I is, too," the voice rasped. "This here is Carwash, an' I be pleased to talk with Sal."

"Sal died a week ago. This is his nephew."

Silence.

"Hello," Joe shouted.

"Too bad," the voice said, and hung up.

Joe trudged six blocks to a convenience store to buy a six-pack. On his way back he passed a newsstand where he acquired his first *Daily Racing Form.* Once home, he popped a top and looked at the next day's entries at Calder. He determined very quickly it was all gibberish. He next studied the will, noted that it had been witnessed by Darrell Angstrum, Nancy Kline, and somebody called Aron Clifford. Okay. Angstrum figured. Kline was probably Angstrum's secretary. So who was Aron Clifford?

THURSDAY
DAY ONE

There aren't many sedatives better than a two thousand mile plane trip and a six-pack of beer. Still, it was a fitful sleep for Joe Moss. The doorbell wrestled him out of a nightmare that seemed to span the entire night. His horse kept winning, but he could never find the window to cash in.

He sat up on the bed, still dressed from the night before, minus his shirt.

Just at mid-chime, he jerked the door open.

The guy wore a Tom Landry hat, was in his young forties, with sunglasses. He took the hat off.

"You Joe Moss?" he asked.

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Joe admitted as much.

"I'm Johnny Dodge." The so-what look from Joe caused him to expand on that a bit. "I trained Sal's horses when he had them at the track."

Dodge was hustled into the air-conditioned living room. It wasn't ten A.M. yet, but already outside the heat was melting dashboards.

"How do you happen to know me?" Joe asked him.

"From your uncle." Dodge looked about for a place to put his hat. Didn't find one, so he put it back on his head, "He told me about the will," he added.

Joe sprawled his wiry frame on the divan. "That's wonderful. I wish he had told me."

Dodge sat on the very edge of a recliner opposite Joe. "Your uncle and me spent near one whole evening at the Top of the Turf Lounge. He mentioned the will. I've thought about it off and on ever since. I think I know a foolproof way we can get one sure winner."

"We?"

"I'd expect a small fee . . . say fifty thousand . . . but I guarantee the horse will win."

Joe refrained from laughing in his face, with difficulty.

"And if he doesn't win?"

"He's going to win," Dodge persisted. "If he doesn't, you wouldn't have the money to fork over anyway, so it's academic."

"It might be academic if it was only your money," Joe pointed out. "But I'll be out more than fifty thousand. A lot more."

"He's not going to lose, so this whole damn conversation is academic."

"Okay, okay . . . " Joe's hands went up. "I guess this thing is beginning to get to me. Did my uncle happen to mention why he dreamed up such a crackbrained will? Was there a reason or did he do all his rowing with one oar?"

Dodge flashed a grin. "You had to know him. He was a bit eccentric, for sure. Winning was everything for him. You know, the thrill of victory. The money was just a way to keep score. He didn't get along with many people. And anybody outside the game, he wouldn't even talk to them."

"The game?"

"You know . . . racing . . . betting. If you don't think owning racehorses is a gamble, you got a lot to learn. Maybe he figured to make you a player."

"I guess he managed that, all right. What have you got in mind anyway?"

Dodge had his hat off again. The bald spot on top of his head was notable. He spun the hat slowly in his hands before him as he spoke.

"Do you know what a claiming horse is?"

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"Hell, I don't even know which end eats."

As Dodge began to divulge some of his vast knowledge concerning the racing of horses, his voice fairly danced. It was, one might easily discern, a subject he was most enthralled with.

"Well, a claiming race is a race made up of horses entered for a specific claiming price. That is, each horse in the race is eligible to be claimed for the price he is entered for. For example, if a claiming race is run for ten thousand dollar claimers, any of the horses in the race can be claimed, or bought if you prefer, for the claiming amount. The buying, or-claiming, party does this by entering a claim slip in the claiming box in the Racing Secretary's office prior to the race. Once the gate opens and the horse starts, the horse belongs to the person entering the claim slip, even if the animal drops dead three steps out of the gate.

Joe stifled a yawn.

"Look, I'm trying to help you."

"Sorry."

"There is a purpose to claiming races," Dodge struggled on, ruffled but game, "over and above the fact that some guy wants to buy or sell a horse. Claiming races are what keeps the whole thing honest. What do you think would happen if you owned a horse who could easily defeat fifteen thousand dollar claimers and you entered him in a five thousand dollar claiming race?"

"Drop dead three steps out of the gate is probably not the answer," Joe replied without conviction.

Ignoring him, Dodge continued, more determined than ever. "Two things would happen," he said. "First, the horse would surely be claimed. Secondly, more important for us, the horse would certainly win the race. The owner would pick up a paltry three thousand dollar share of the purse, but he would lose an animal capable of earning twenty times that amount. You understand?"

"I think I can follow that. He wins the race but loses the horse."

"You got it. Without the claiming principle, a really good horse could run up a big bankroll running against cheaper stock. But I don't have time to go into all the ins and outs of the game. The point here is your uncle ran some very good quality stock. Sal's got one colt on the farm, General George, a top-notch allowance horse, worth at least a hundred thousand dollars. He's won two minor stakes races. My idea is to bring him down to Calder and run him in Saturday's sixth race, a ten thousand dollar claiming sprint. It's the cheapest race I can get him into

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where he fits the conditions. It's going to be a very expensive win, because somebody, probably everybody, will have a claim in on him. But it's as close to a sure thing as you'll ever get at any racetrack."

Joe retained a natural inclination to distrust anybody involved in this crazy situation, at least until he knew more. Still, Johnny Dodge seemed on the up and up. And his scheme sounded reasonable. It could very well be the answer. Besides, his alternatives were nonexistent.

"Let's say you've convinced me," he told Dodge. "What do we do next?"

Dodge leaned forward, a tinge of urgency in his voice. "The horse must be entered forty-eight hours prior to the race. That means if you want to go ahead with it, I have to know today."

Joe eased himself off the divan, retrieved his shirt off the back of Dodge's chair. "All right, go ahead," he said, donning the crumpled shirt.

"It might be a good idea if we didn't memtion this to anybody," Dodge warned him.

Joe thought about it. Patton was the only other person who knew about the will that had anything to gain.

"You mean Patton?"

"I mean anybody, but especially Patton. The less he knows about what we do the better."

Joe pondered the sense of it. If anybody was out to scuttle him, it would have to be Patton. However, one thing bothered him.

"I don't understand," he said, tucking in his shirt. "Patton told me all the money would go to the organization—said there wasn't anything in it for him personally."

Dodge laughed. "That's bull, Jerry Patton *is* the organization. I doubt if the TOL has ten members."

It was such a crazy deal. Joe wondered if Patton had in some way been able to alter the will. His reasoning took him one step further. If Patton could alter the will, why bother with all this pick-a-winner crap? Why not just take it all? He needed more information. "Okay; I'll watch what I say," he told Dodge. He started for the refrigerator, remembered the six-pack had been vanquished, came back into the living room. "By the way. What do you know about a Carwash?"

"A what?"

"Somebody called me up. Said his name was Carwash."

Dodge was silent for a moment. "I haven't any . . . wait a minute. Did it sound like an old man? Talked funny?"

"He was a bit strange."

"There's this old black guy. Rubs horses in the backstretch.

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They call him Carwash. Carwash Clifford. Not too nimble upstairs. He's worked for me a few times muckin' out stalls and walkin' hots. What did he call here for?"

"He never got around to telling me. Do you remember his first name—his real name?"

"Arnold or something like that. I wouldn't worry about it. He was probably trying to put the bite on you. He's just an old bum. I think Sal might have been feeding him a few bucks now and then. Sal always put him on as a groom when he had horses at the track."

Joe picked up his copy of the will. He looked at the signatures of the witnesses again. "Could his first name be Aron?" he asked.

"That sounds right."

"You know where I might find him?"

"He works the Calder backstretch during the summer, so that's probably where he is now. When the northern trainers come down for the Hialeah-Gulfstream meet, they bring most of their own people, so he works the carwash in the winter. He's dependable with the horses, but not too smart. Been known to suck on a wine bottle. Why would you want to find him?"

"Just curious as to why he called here."

Dodge struggled out of the recliner. "I've got to get to the track. I'm working a couple of two-year-olds this morning. Tell the security man at the gate to give me a call. I'll get you into the backstretch."

"How about if I catch a ride with you? I don't have any wheels yet."

"Sure. Come along." Dodge snapped his fingers. "Damn, I almost forgot. Can I use the phone? I have to arrange to get General George shipped down here from Ocala."

Dodge left Joe just inside the gate to the stabling area, after pointing him in the general direction of the receiving barn, the area in which he was most likely to find Carwash.

The shed rows in the morning were a bustle of activity. Joe nailed the first passerby who didn't have a handful of horse.

"That's Carwash over there working on the bay horse," he was directed.

"Which?"

"The old black guy with the baseball cap."

The old man wore a battle-scarred, red button-down shirt, sizes too large for his neck. An abundance of unfilled pants bunched at the belt, bagged in the butt. He was stooped and toothless, and was crooning just audibly to his charge. The animal was a statue, rock still, as the currycomb worked its way

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down the muscular neck. A tattered copy of the *Form,* defaced with inked crisscrosses and squiggles, drooped limply from his rear pocket.

"You Carwash?"

"Yessir, I is."

Joe explained who he was as the old man steadily worked around the horse.

"I'd like to know what you know about the will?" Joe asked.

"I don't know nuthin'."

"Sal's will. You signed it as a witness—you are Aron Clifford, aren't you?"

"Dat's who I is. But I don't recollect nuthin' 'bout no will."

"Don't you remember signing a paper for Sal De Costa?"

"Yessir, I signed a paper. Don't know 'bout it bein' no will. Sal, he say for me to sign da paper, so dat's what I done."

"Okay. Where did you sign it at?"

"At da bottom."

"No. I mean where were you and Uncle Sal when you signed the will?"

"Sal, he be carrin' me to the track. We stop at dis lawyer place."

"Law offices?" Joe helped out. "Angstrum, Bigalow and Bluett?"

"Yessir. Dat's da place."

"Who else was there . . . er . . . who else signed the paper?"

Carwash tipped his hat to scratch his forehead with his little finger. His brow scrunched up in concentration, he spoke slowly.

"Was a fine dress gentaman. A lady woman what work dere. An' Sal, Sal he sign da paper."

Joe concluded the will was probably of Sal's creation, but it didn't appear that Carwash would be of much help in determining his uncle's motives concerning it, so he shifted gears and started over.

"Why did you call Sal's house?"

"Wantin' to talk to Sal."

"Yes. But what about?"

" 'Bout da list," Carwash said, leading the stallion back into his stall. He hooked the restraining straps across the stall opening, reached out and rubbed the horse under the chin. "You is a good boy. Ain'tcha?" he said to the horse.

"What list?"

Carwash laid a wedge of hay into a small rack inside the stall with maddening slowness. "Guess it don't hurt none to say now," he finally answered. "Sal, he give me a list of horses every couple weeks. Maybe three o' fo'. I tells him if they's been standin' in ice water all night. If they's been eatin' good, other problems if they's got any. I tells him 'bout da work schedules, such like dat."

"You're a spy?"

"Yessir, I is. For a hundred dollar a week."

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"Can I see the last list he gave you?"

The old man pulled a crumpled piece of paper from his shirt pocket. He handed it to Joe. There were only three names: Jock-Me-Boy, Passing Fancy, and Warp Drive Lady.

Joe looked up from the list. "I suppose Sal used the information you gave him to make his bets."

"He don't tell Carwash what he's a doin'." Then the old man cackled. "You be havin' you fly unzipped, Sal he don't say nuthin'."

Joe glanced at the list again. "What can you tell me about Passing Fancy?" he asked.

"You mean fur free?"

Joe took the hint. He fished around in his wallet, decided traveler's checks were out, pried out a hundred dollar bill. He handed it to Carwash. "How about now?"

Carwash snapped the bill from his hand. He began to articulate nonstop.

"Passing Fancy, he got arthritis in the rear end bad. Can't pump in 'nough bute to help. Might do okay was to take him long, with plenty warm-up. Put a quarter crack patch on his right front hoof two day ago. Not a good bet.

"Warp Drive Lady, teeth need floatin'. Not eatin' up her grain. Tender stifle on the right side. Bore in bad, she's sticked on dat side. Some heat in the front legs after a workout last Thursday.

"Jock-Me-Boy, trainer used a unmarked saddle blanket to get him by the clockers. Breezed in forty-six and change. Clockers never caught it. Had him in with a bunch a maiden two-year-olds. Last time out, he raced with a loose shoe what turned sideways. Still ran third."

One of the things Joe suspected early on about his uncle, Sal wasn't a fool when it came to spending his money. The information was probably worth the C-note. "When does Jock-Me-Boy run next?" he asked.

"Eighth on Saturday," Carwash reported. Casting a worried glance up the shed row, he quickly picked up a pail and shovel. "Got to go. Here come Mr. Evans."

Evans was a small man. At one point in his long career he had been a jockey of some repute, until the weight-age syndrome did him in. He still worked his own horses despite the gray hair and forty-odd years on the backstretch, concluding it was the best and cheapest way to get a feel for the animal's true condition. He led a slightly lathered roan mare.

"Cool her out," he told Carwash, who immediately dropped his implements to comply.

Joe introduced himself as Sal De Costa's nephew, explaining

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he had come down about the funeral arrangements. He said nothing about the will.

"Sorry to hear about Sal," Evans said. "I had a couple of his horses off and on."

"I thought Johnny Dodge was his trainer?"

"Sal switched trainers like I change socks. He wasn't what you would call a trusting man."

Joe took a chance. He explained about the will and outlined Dodge's visit. More to find out if the scheme was valid than anything else.

Evans laughed with enthusiasm when Joe finished telling about the will. He listened intently, nodding his head several times while Joe unraveled Johnny Dodge's proposed solution.

"The TOL gets it all if you pick the wrong horse," Evans repeated. This caused another short bit of mirth. "Well, you can be sure of one thing. That sounds exactly like something Sal would do."

"What's so funny?"

"There ain't no TOL. Jerry came around two, three years ago trying to form the League. He might have a few members, but it died on the vine. Sal wouldn't even join the League, so why would he leave them a chance to get all his money? He knew Patton was gonna try to get that money. He's setting you up, boy."

"Sal is setting me up?" Joe was incredulous.

"Sal was a player. It was his business to pick the right horse. Now he's made you a player, too. Jerry Patton is not an evil man, but he's not going to pass up this deal."

"But what can he do? Wouldn't it be hard for him to fix a race? I thought there were controls."

"People don't fix races no more," Evans informed him. "They don't have to. Races can be manipulated legally. There are lots of ways to lose, but only one way to win. Course, there is no incentive to lose, so not much manipulating is done. But any horse can be made to break poorly, or get a bad position on the turns, be rated poorly by the jock—there's a hundred ways a horse can come upon bad racing luck naturally. Running him just to lose is easy, but there's no profit in it."

"What about General George, could he beat those horses like Dodge says?"

"That depends a lot on the other horses in with him. It depends on his current condition. I'd have to say, though, it's a pretty good bet. He hasn't raced for a few months, but I know the horse—he's sound enough. He stays in light training on the farm. If he's only sixty percent, he should win with no trouble, but I'll have a claim in on him," Evans warned.

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"How about Sal De Costa. What kind of a man was he?"

The trainer started walking down the shed row. Joe followed along.

"This is what interested Sal," Evans said, swinging his arm in an encompassing gesture. "He didn't drink, he wouldn't dull himself mentally, because he always had something in the works. Didn't smoke. Only rarely would he even talk to a woman. He was all business. As sharp as they come and not afraid to risk everything on his decision, but only if he thought he had an edge.

"What about Dodge and Patton, are they good friends?"

"Not particularly. Dodge doesn't belong to the TOL, I'm sure of that. But Patton is a respected owner and trainer. He's on a first name basis with everybody back here."

Joe used the phone in a gas station down the road from the track to get a cab. He used the rest of the day to mull over the information he had gathered. One thing was clear already, Johnny Dodge had probably lied to him. He said that he and Sal had discussed the will late into the evening at the Top of the Turf Lounge. Sal didn't drink, and from what he could tell, wasn't inclined to discuss his business. Dodge also implied he was Sal's trainer, while in fact Sal used many trainers. So what else might Johnny Dodge have fudged on?

FRIDAY
DAY TWO

The phone rang early the next morning. It was Johnny Dodge. He reported General George was on his way down from Ocala, and everything was set to go on Saturday. Joe had rethought the situation. Dodge had never said Uncle Sal had anything to drink. He had only said they were together at the lounge, but the implication was there. Dodge had warned him about Patton and the TOL. Of course, it was something he could easily have found out himself. Maybe Dodge was just after a quick buck, and who isn't these days. He gave the green light to Dodge and sat down with the will to look it over one more time. There were still two other persons privy to the will. The secretary he could rule out. The other witness was Darrell Angstrum.

He called the offices of Angstrum, Bigalow and Bluett. He managed to get Angstrum on the phone.

"Oh, Mr. Moss, sorry I wasn't here to handle things yesterday. Out of town on business. How can I help you?"

Joe wedged the receiver between neck and shoulder while

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he fired up a smoke. "Ah . . . you were a witness to the will," he said, drawing in a lungful. "I wonder if my uncle gave you any indication as to why he had you draw up something so bizarre?"

A slight pause ensued.

"Mr. De Costa wrote the will himself. We merely made a legal document out of it. He wasn't in the habit of discussing his affairs. However, I can assure you, the will is legal and binding."

"I'm sure it is," Joe responded, devoid of elation. "Did you handle all my uncle's legal business?"

"We did work for him from time to time. As to all of his affairs, I think not."

From what he'd learned, that statement held the ring of truth. "There is one other thing. If I should be lucky enough to win the inheritance," he emphasized the word win, "I might like to use your good offices. What is your position with the firm?"

"I'm the senior partner," Angstrum explained. "Your uncle was my client. Rightfully, I should have been the one to administer the reading of the will, but seeing that I was out of town . . . " he trailed off. "Of course, we would welcome you as a client."

"Would it be possible to get in to see you this afternoon? I'd like to talk to you about the will."

"If you are thinking about contesting, I should warn you we don't handle cases against ourselves."

Joe laughed. "No, it's nothing like that."

Patton moved nervously around Johnny Dodge's littered office. "This could all blow up in our faces, you know?" he cautioned Dodge, who reposed on a bale of prime northern alfalfa hay, kept jealously guarded for his top money horse.

"He's in my pocket," Dodge reassured him. "It's too good for him to pass up. From his point of view, what else is he going to do?"

"No," Patton said, "it's not Moss. *He'll* go for it."

"What then?"

"The General. He scares me. He's too damn good a horse to be in with that bunch of crows."

Dodge brushed a fly off his nose. "Don't worry," he said. "The General hasn't seen a training track for over two months. Not since they removed that bone chip from his knee. Only Sal and me knew about that. I wouldn't have known if I hadn't gone up to see Sal. I named Gus to ride him. I told him the horse had deteriorated so much that we were just running him back to dump him. I told him to take it easy,

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take him wide, to stay out of trouble. I hinted that the horse could break down and I didn't want him in traffic where he might get trampled to death. The race filled real good. There's a couple of real speedballs in there, they both drew inside posts. You know the General hasn't run a short race in years. He's a router. Even if he gets in gear, he's bound to run out of racetrack."

To Dodge's way of thinking, he was in a unique can't-lose situation. If the General should happen to win, he'd collect the fifty thousand from Moss, if he lost, he'd get the two hundred thousand promised by Patton.

"I still don't like it," Patton persisted. "If he's anywhere close to himself, he'll run rings around those plodders. Any time you get a horse that runs as strong as the General, you're taking a chance. We don't want to take any chances."

"We can't risk doping the horse," Dodge was quick to establish.

"No, no, not that," Patton said. "Here's what you do. Reshoe him a couple of hours before the race so his feet are tender. Give him six or seven quarts of grain and all the water and hay he wants Saturday morning. Make sure Gus goes in overweight. Take him to supper tonight."

SATURDAY
THE LAST DAY

Joe was already up when Dodge arrived this time.

"You want a beer?" Joe asked him.

"You kidding? It's only ten o'clock in the morning."

"Just being sociable."

"You got your selection prepared? We have to be at the lawyer's by noon."

Joe picked up an envelope from the table. "It's all in here," he said.

"You sure you got it right? General George, the sixth race at Calder, today's date?"

"It's right."

"Maybe you better let me check and make sure."

"I didn't make any mistake," Joe insisted, turning the envelope over. Dodge noticed a red blob on the back flap.

"What's that sticking on there?"

"That's sealing wax," Joe revealed. He held up his right hand, displaying his ring. "It's got the impression of this ring on it. Just like the old emperors used to do."

"What's the point?"

"You said not to let Patton know about the selection." He put the envelope in his shirt pocket.

"Yeah, but it wouldn't do him any good this late."

Joe started for the door. "Why

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take chances?" he said. "Anyway, I sealed it so nobody could change it."

"Whatever blows your dress up," Dodge said, following him out the door.

Patton, Bluett, and Angstrum were waiting for them when they arrived.

"Ah, welcome, Mr. Moss," Bluett said. "I trust you have made your selection?"

"Yes, I have." Joe motioned toward Dodge. "This is a friend of mine, Johnny Dodge." Amenities were observed all around.

Angstrum, tall, slender, well dressed, had everything but Successful Lawyer stamped on his forehead. "May I have your selection, Mr. Moss?" he asked, holding forth his hand.

Bluett quickly explained that Mr. De Costa had been the client of Angstrum. That the only reason he, Bluett, had conducted the reading was because of Angstrum's pressing schedule.

"However," Bluett explained. "Mr. Angstrum will conduct the rest of the proceedings."

"Thank you, Roger," said Angstrum, and took the envelope from Joe.

"If you don't mind," Joe interceded. "I would just as soon you didn't open it until after we return from the track."

"That's highly irregular." Bluett rolled out the time honored phrase with great delight.

"Perhaps," Joe said. "But nothing in the will says anybody has to know the selection prior to the event. It states only that I have to present the selection prior to race time. I've read it carefully."

When the quibbling had ceased, a re-reading of the will by Angstrum confirmed the fact.

"Would you deign to tell us which race you have chosen?" Angstrum asked. "So that I might know approximately what time you will return. Will it be necessary to keep the office open after five P.M., our closing time?"

"I can't tell you," was Joe's reply.

"Very well," said Angstrum. "I will place your sealed selection in the office safe and await your return. But I advise you, there will be an additional fee for this."

Patton, Dodge, and Joe took seats in the clubhouse. They sat through the first five races without making a bet. The conversation was also limited.

"I should go down and see about the General," Dodge said after the running of the fifth race.

As he got to his feet, Joe grabbed him by the arm. "Can they do it without you?"

Dodge gave him a questioning look. "I suppose so," he said.

"Stay then."

General George drew the

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number eight post position in a field of twelve. He was a big, heavily muscled horse. The sun danced off his black, well groomed coat as he paraded past. When finally they were all in the gate, Dodge and Patton used their field glasses to watch the break on the far side of the track. Joe could see little.

THEY'RE OFF!

Twelve charging thoroughbreds exploded from containment in a ragged line. The number two horse, a smallish bay, took the lead on the rail in the backstretch. Number three, a mottled roan, fell in close behind the leader. General George broke slowly. He trailed the field on the outside going into the far turn.

"What's happening?" Joe asked.

"Two horse got the lead," Dodge said, binoculars glued to his face.

Joe picked up the leaders clearly as they came around the stretch turn. The small bay held a slight lead, but the roan had found an opening inside and was coming on. General George was far outside, next to last at the top of the stretch. Then something happened.

The roan had passed the tiring bay horse and was drawing off from that one. As Joe watched General George, it was almost as if the gallant horse said to himself, *What the hell's going on here. I can beat this bunch.* He laid back his ears, grabbed the bit with a shake of his powerful neck, and surged forward, nearly pulling the unsuspecting jock over his head. He quickly passed the pack going seven wide on the turn, caught and passed the little bay in less than a few heartbeats. He picked up speed with each powerful stride and began to reach down the stretch for the roan, which held a dwindling five length lead at the sixteenth pole.

Patton and Dodge were on their feet.

The gap was rapidly closing. Joe could barely hear the announcer above the din.

"IT'S IVY COURT BY FOUR LENGTHS . . . AND HERE COMES GENERAL GEORGE . . . IVY COURT BY TWO . . . IVY COURT, IVY COURT AND GENERAL GEORGE . . . "

Patton and Dodge were screaming in tandem.

"No, Gus, no!" from Dodge. "I'll kill ya! You hillbilly!" from Patton.

General George and Ivy Court finished together. If the race had been a distance of six furlongs and one foot it would have been no contest.

"I don't think he made it," Dodge said to no one in particular. Patton shot him an icy stare while they waited out the photo.

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When they posted the finish as three, eight, two, Patton heaved a visible sigh. The General had run second, and Patton had not come so close to wetting his pants since 1951 in Korea.

"Sorry," Dodge said to Joe. "It was a hell of a try."

"Damned exciting," said Joe.

Patton fidgeted. Dodge stood up.

"Well, we might as well go," Dodge announced.

"I'm going to stay," Joe told them. "I got a tip in the eighth."

Dodge and Patton exchanged glances. Dodge leaned over to whisper in Joe's ear. "What the hell's going on? You selected this race, didn't you?"

"That's right. But I've got a hundred dollars I want to bet on Jock-Me-Boy in the eighth."

"But we lost," Dodge felt obliged to enlighten him.

"I'm staying for the eighth race. You two can do as you please."

They remained for another hour. Joe went up and bet the hundred dollars on Jock-Me-Boy to win. He showed the ticket to Dodge. "It's a sure thing," he told him.

Jock-Me-Boy went off at six to one. He wired his field, winning off by five and half lengths. Joe collected his winnings, and the three of them piled into Patton's LTD for the return trip.

Angstrum greeted them impatiently. "Come along now," he told them. "It's nearly five fifteen. I have a dinner engagement this evening."

Angstrum went directly to the safe and withdrew the sealed envelope. He stuck it up for Joe to examine. "As you can see," he said. "your seal has not been tampered with. Do I have your permission to open it now?"

"Be my guest," said Joe.

Angstrum withdrew a paper from the envelope which he promptly read aloud. "It says here: 'Ivy Court, the sixth race at Calder, this date.' "

Patton looked poleaxed. "Ivy Court, he's the horse that beat the General." He turned on Joe. "There's no way in hell you could have handicapped that horse."

"Really?" said Joe. "I believe you have the proof before you."

"He paid $64.20," Dodge threw in.

"Let me see that," Patton raged, jerking the slip from Angstrum. "Something wrong here," he professed with lackluster confidence, staring at the slip in disbelief.

"Everything seems to be quite in order as far as I can tell," Angstrum informed him. "Can I assume from your attitude, Mr. Patton, that this Ivy Cop . . . er, Court did in fact win the sixth race?"

"Yes, yes, he won, you damn fool. But how did Moss pick him?"

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"That's not my concern, and I would advise you to watch your mouth," Angstrum lashed back surprisingly. He stared a challenge at Patton. When no more expletives were forthcoming, he said more calmly, "I believe this concludes our business. If there is nothing more . . . " It was an invitation to vacate. They all began to file out. Patton left scratching his head over how Joe was able to pinpoint a thirty to one winner, while Johnny Dodge, more realistically, left trying to understand how, in a can't-lose situation, he came up empty.

Angstrum halted Joe at the doorway.

"Could you stay a minute, Mr. Moss? There are a few papers to sign."

When the others had left, Angstrum locked the door. "Come into my office," he said. He waited until Joe had seated himself, then closed the office door and took up a position behind the desk. He took from a bottom drawer a large divided folder and laid it atop the desk.

"How soon did you know?" Joe asked.

"The results came over the radio in my car at five past four. When it turned out that the number three horse was victorious, it took only a few seconds to make the switch. We should dispose of these, however," he concluded, withdrawing from the folder eleven identical white envelopes with red seals on the back flaps.

Joe lit up a smoke. "I didn't think I was going to be able to keep them at the track long enough for you to get the results," Joe told him. "But it worked out. I even won seven hundred and twenty bucks in the eighth race. Easiest money I ever made."

Angstrum grinned. "I knew there was a lot of your uncle in you when you proposed this scheme. The check you have made out in the firm's favor for four hundred thousand in retainer and legal fees will be negotiated after final settlement is made. What are your plans now?"

"I guess I'll hang around. Maybe stop by and talk to Carwash tomorrow."

"Who?"

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Tears for Maggie Shannon

by Stephen Wasylyk



How anyone can determine that no two snowflakes are alike is beyond me, since they fall by the billions, even trillions, or some other astronomical figure equalled only by the national debt, and I doubt if comparison on any scale can be made.

I do know, however, that any resident of Fox River County can testify that no two snowstorms are alike. Some are vicious, leaving snapped tree limbs and downed power lines in their wake; others gentle, giving the county all the qualities of a Christmas card scene; still others carry with them a feeling of foreboding and menace as though the wall of flakes masks things better left undiscovered.

The one I was driving through now gave me that feeling. Small fine flakes, driven by a bone-chilling north wind out of a low, charcoal sky, coated the roads quickly with a slick layer that had me handling the wheel of the four-wheel drive gingerly, and even then I was doing my share of slipping and sliding and thinking that a prudent man would stop and put on tire chains.

It would be embarrassing to have the county sheriff's vehicle lodged in a roadside ditch, nestled against a tree trunk

Illustration by Nicola Cuti

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like the red Toyota that took shape ahead of me.

I let the four-wheel drive slow to a stop, stepped out, and went forward to meet the young woman who had been frantically waving.

She was almost as tall as I, with a pleasant square face and wide expressive blue eyes below the knitted cap pulled low. It is hard for any woman to look attractive standing in a snowstorm in a heavy coat, slacks, and boots. She managed better than most.

Her smile was warm. "Rescued by the law."

"My name is Gates. I'm the sheriff. Are you hurt?"

"Only my ego. I thought I was a better driver." She indicated the car. "Can you do anything about this?"

"Merely express my sympathy."

I glanced up at the skis strapped to the car roof. "Headed for one of the lodges, Miss—?"

"Carla Donner. In a roundabout way. I'm from New York and have been invited to spend the weekend with a friend who has an apartment a few miles up the road."

I reached for the straps holding the skis. "Let's see if we can get you there while we can still navigate."

We tossed her skis and bag in the rear and I coaxed the four-wheel drive into motion.

"Is driving this hazardous all winter?"

"A temporary condition," I said. "The sand and salt crews have been out since this started, but it takes time to cover all the roads. What do you do in New York? Secretary?"

"That's a chauvinistic question. Do you believe all women are secretaries?"

"Far from it. Simply guessing at the most likely occupation."

"Actually I'm in your line of work. I'm a detective with the NYPD."

"Now that is a surprise. Like what you do?"

"It has its moments."

"Good or bad?"

She hesitated. "Both."

She had suddenly shifted from bright and smiling to somber. I had an idea she'd been having more bad moments than good lately.

I tried to lighten her mood. "Obviously, one of the qualifications isn't the ability to drive in snow."

I didn't get the laugh I expected. Instead I seemed to have touched off a lurking anger I was sure had nothing to do with me.

"Very funny," she snapped. "Turn here."

The garden apartment complex was recently built—ugly two story brick buildings tucked into a stand of trees and fronted by a huge parking lot. What the

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development lacked in esthetics, it made up in convenience.

"The second entrance." The tone of her voice suggested she couldn't wait to get there.

I pulled up before the door. "I'll help you inside."

"I can manage."

"Call it professional courtesy."

Her eyebrows arched. "That was something I decided you lacked."

"About the time I decided you lacked a sense of humor, I suppose."

She bit the words off. "I'll take the skis."

As I pulled her bag from the vehicle, she glanced upward at the building where a second floor window was partially open.

"Your friend's apartment?"

She nodded. "Why would the window be open in this weather?"

"Let's ask her. Or is it him?"

"Her," she said. "Was that another joke?"

"I thought it was a perfectly legitimate question."

I carried her bag up the stairs. She tapped at the door of the apartment. While we waited, I wondered what was bothering her.

"Perhaps she's asleep," I said.

She pounded harder. Again no response.

"Something's wrong," she said. "I talked to her last night. She knew when I expected to get here and she said she'd be waiting. She certainly wouldn't have gone out in this storm."

I tried the door. It was locked.

I had noticed the manager's sign as we drove in. "Wait here." I went outside and down the slippery walk. The snow continued to come down on the diagonal, propelled by that icy wind, that feeling of foreboding persisting.

The manager was a short man with a thin crop of gray hair and the willingness to help that a badge seems to inspire in most people. Luckily, she had trusted him with a key.

The first thing I noticed was that the apartment was cold, almost as cold as outdoors. The living room was deserted, a lamp still burning on an end table beside a sofa. I went down a short, rug-covered hall past the bathroom, the air getting colder.

The second thing I noticed was the darkhaired young woman, dressed in a blue robe and nightgown, awkwardly sprawled on the beige bedroom rug, a white silk muffler knotted tightly around her neck.

Three hours later I locked the door of the apartment and sealed it. The body had been removed to the hospital where Dr. Blenheim would perform the autopsy.

Whatever sorrow and grief

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Carla Donner felt had been buried beneath a professional coldness, as though this were just another case, but the hurt and the tears had to be there because this wasn't just another case. The victim had been her friend.

I didn't understand, but then I didn't understand that open window or the white silk scarf, either. The scarf might have been fine for the city, but pure wool was more appropriate for Fox River winters, and there were days when even that wasn't warm enough.

The woman's name was Maggie Shannon, and she and Carla Donner had shared an apartment in New York until Maggie took a position as a bookkeeper at one of the ski resorts, wanting to try living away from a big city for a change. She and Carla had kept in touch since then, and Carla had driven up last summer for a visit. Everything had been fine. The Shannon woman was very happy and had tried to talk Carla into making the same move. Carla hadn't seen her after that.

The snow would have delayed matters if I'd made the usual call to the state police to take the photographs and dust the apartment for fingerprints, so my one and only deputy handled that end, which was no cause for concern. Julio was good at everything he did. Fortunately. From the way Carla hung over his shoulder, he would have heard about it if he wasn't.

I'd spent my time interviewing the neighbors.

A couple on the first floor had seen the Shannon woman leaving about nine the previous evening, alone, even though she had been dressed as though she had a date.

A lanky type down the hall named Garrett Hill seemed familiar, and I finally placed him. He was a doctor's assistant at the hospital, and I'd seen him there several times. He'd arrived home at two in the morning and hadn't yet gone to bed when he heard loud voices and the slamming of a door. He'd shrugged it off. I wished he'd been more curious.

By the time we were finished, the neighbors had all retreated to their apartments, leaving the hallway deserted except for Carla's bag and skis.

If anything, her face was grimmer.

"Obviously, you can't spend the night here," I said. "You have two choices. You can stay at my house, since I won't be using it, or you can come back to the office with me. You can get some sleep in one of the cells if you don't mind a hard mattress."

"I would be alone at your house?"

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I nodded.

"Then I'd rather not," she said softly. "I'll take the cell."

She was feeling something after all, I thought.

"We can also arrange for your car to be towed to a garage. It might be possible to put it into driving condition without too much trouble."

"I won't be heading back just yet," she said. "Maggie had no living relatives, so I'll stay to do what must be done. Also, I don't intend to leave until I find out who did this." Her eyes lifted to mine. "That is, if you don't mind."

"I don't mind. I'm always willing to take all the help I can get." I picked up her bag and headed for the stairs. "But it might take longer than you think."

"I have plenty of leave coming."

I didn't know why, but I had the idea that the leave would be better spent on a warm beach somewhere.

The snow was several inches deep, a shortened twilight fast changing into a gray night. She stood scanning the cars parked before the building.

"I don't see her car."

"What kind is it?"

"A yellow Trans-Am. She loved that car and she hated to walk. The car should be as close to this door as she could get."

I ushered her into the four-wheel drive. "Let's look for it."

There was no Trans-Am on the lot at all.

"Sure she didn't replace it?"

"Not without telling me. This doesn't make sense. The keys are in her purse." She held up a leather bag. "I brought it along so you could put it in your safe. But the car isn't here. How did she get home?"

"Perhaps someone brought her."

"She had to have a reason to leave that car."

"It might have broken down and someone gave her a lift. You had much the same thing happen this afternoon. If that's it, we'll know tomorrow. There aren't that many garages or service stations to check."

"Can't we check them tonight?"

"Only one that might be open. If we're lucky, he'll tow your car in."

"The car is the least of my worries now."

It would have been the least of mine, too.

Driving was a little easier now that the tires had something to bite into. The roads were deserted, anyone with any sense staying cosy and warm by a fire, but I knew the night would produce its share of fender benders. Some people always came up with an emergency, real or imagined, that took them out.

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Carla had lapsed into silence. In a way, the woman really had a great deal going for her. Her friend was dead, but whatever she was feeling inside, she had gone through the last three hours in a cold and thoroughly professional manner. It could be excellent self-control. Or it could be that she had buried her feelings so often that now she couldn't shed tears, even for a friend. Compassion, sorrow, and grief, like anything else, atrophy when stifled, and no person is better without them. I hoped she hadn't reached that stage.

Julio had arrived at the office long before we did, so that the coffee was fresh and hot and the woodburning stove we'd installed to save fuel was giving off a welcome warmth.

"Make yourself at home," I told Carla.

Julio's teeth flashed beneath his black mustache, and he waved her to the chair behind his desk as though seating her in the royal box.

"I don't want to put either of you out."

"You're not," I said. "Julio is leaving. He has a wife waiting who gets angry with me when he is late for dinner. Fortunately, I don't understand Spanish so I have no idea what she calls me when he is."

"Don't believe him," said Julio. "She is a very understanding woman. How about food? Shall I have the diner send something over?"

"It would be appreciated," I said. "Any preferences, Miss Donner?"

"I'm not hungry," she said.

"I don't know what they taught you in New York," I said, "but you'll find that hunger does nothing for the thinking process."

She looked at me for a long moment, then said to Julio, "Just a sandwich, please. Whatever you recommend."

He nodded and left.

I poured coffee for both of us and sat at my desk with my feet up, watching her.

"What about men in your friend's life?" I asked. "She ever mention any?"

"None in particular. They seemed to come and go."

"How often?"

"I don't think I like that question."

"Like it or not, there was no sign of forcible entry. Whoever knotted that scarf had to be invited inside, and I doubt it was a woman."

I swung my feet from the desk and punched out a number on the phone.

When the voice answered, I said, "Harry, this is Sheriff Gates. There's a Toyota in a ditch about five miles out of town on the river road. When can you tow it in?"

"Near that apartment house

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where the woman was killed?"

I was never surprised at how quickly news spread in Fox River.

"About three miles farther out. Can you pick it up?"

"Later on. The truck is over at the Aces and Deuces right now."

"An accident?"

"Nothing like that. Gil Megaron has had a car on his lot since last night and it's keeping him from getting it plowed off."

The Aces and Deuces was one of the local singles bars. Visitor or resident, if you had some time on your hands and were looking for company, it was the place to go. You just might luck out, but whatever happened, it was probably better than spending the evening alone in your apartment.

"What kind of car is it, Harry?"

"Don't know. Why?"

"Just curious. Call me when it comes in."

The kid from the diner delivered what passed for our evening meal. Carla ate mechanically, staring out the window at the snow and seeing nothing. We were almost finished when the phone rang.

Harry Oates said, "He just came back, Gates. It's a yellow Trans-Am."

"Bring that car inside but don't touch it, Harry. Do I make myself clear? Don't lay a hand on it. I'll be right over."

Carla was still staring out the window.

"We found your friend's car."

She sat up straight. "Where was it?"

"In the parking lot of the local singles bar. Let's go see why. Bring the keys."

I called Julio and told him where he could reach us, then flicked the switch that transferred incoming calls to the extension in his home.

Harry Oates' shop was at the edge of town, a flat cinder block building with several bays and a large, fenced yard to store the cars. I never knew what percentage of repair and body business Harry drew from the county, but I did know— probably because he worked sixteen hours a day—that he was always busy.

He had pushed the Trans-Am into the center bay, and it sat dripping melted snow on the cement floor.

Harry, who was tall, with an untrimmed mustache and shaggy hair—he never had time to get to a barber—glanced at Carla.

"Carla Donner," I said. "She's giving me a hand and it's her Toyota you're bringing in."

He nodded. Harry was a man of few words except when talking about cars. "Haven't touched the Trans-Am except to push it inside. The truck is out picking

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up the Toyota."

I nodded. "See if you can start the Trans-Am."

Carla gave him the keys. He turned the engine over a few times without result, then popped the hood and pushed his head beneath it.

"Aha," he said.

I looked where he was pointing. The wire that led to the coil was disconnected.

"No way it would start with that loose," he said.

"And no way it could come loose accidentally," said Carla.

"You got it. Someone didn't want this car to start."

"Okay," I said. "Leave it exactly the way it is. Julio will be here tomorrow with the camera. I want that loose wire on film and the car dusted for prints."

"This have something to do with the murder?"

"Maybe a great deal to do with the murder," I said.

We were walking out when he yelled, "Hey, what do you want me to do with the Toyota?"

"See what it takes to make it drivable and give me a call," said Carla.

When we pulled away, Carla asked, "The singles bar?"

"Where else?"

The Aces and Deuces had been around under a variety of names for as long as anyone could remember, shifting its image and decor to the demands of the times. Originally a restaurant with a bar attached, it was now a bar with a restaurant attached. The food wasn't bad if you wanted to dine there, but that wasn't its primary reason for existence. It was the big bar, the music, and the lights that drew the restless clientele.

Gil Megaron was the opposite of Harry Oates. He had all the time in the world to go to a barber. There wasn't a blond hair out of place, and he looked like he shaved twice a day. Some of the profits of the bar had gone into the designer suit, the imported shoes, and the glitter on his fingers.

The place was deserted. This was one night he would show a loss.

I asked if he knew Maggie Shannon.

He nodded. "A nice, quiet woman, not pushy or desperate like some. She'd have a few drinks, dance a few dances, and that was that."

"Ever see her connect with someone?"

"Not really. I had the impression she came just to break up her evening."

"What about last night?"

"She came and went, I guess."

"And when she went, the car wouldn't start."

"That's not unusual. Happens now and then on cold

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nights. They come back in, call a mechanic. None will come out at that hour, but usually they get to it first thing in the morning. This is the first time one sat there all day. Didn't know who it belonged to or I would have tried to contact her."

"It looks as though she didn't come back in and call last night," said Carla.

I nodded. "The answer to that might also explain how she got home." I indicated the bartender standing idle. "Was he here last night?"

"He was here, yes," said Megaron.

They trailed me to the bar. The half-bald bartender was middle-aged, his face expressionless, his eyes old from looking at thousands of people, a good percentage of them drunk. That would age anyone.

"You know Maggie Shannon?" I asked.

"White wine," he said.

"Someone leave with her last night?"

"Several tried but struck out. A guy named Toby Lang hung around the longest."

"Are you sure she didn't leave with him?"

"I saw her walk out alone. He left right after she did."

"Where can we find him?" asked Carla.

"I know him." said Megaron. "He sells insurance. Tried to sell me a policy. Works for—" He snapped his fingers. "Name escapes me. Hamburger, something like that."

"Frieburger," I said.

"That's it. I guess he can tell you where Lang lives."

I phoned Anton Frieberger. He ran a small real estate and insurance office in town. I ignored his curiosity and made a note of Lang's address.

There was one more person I wanted to talk to. From behind the bar, in a crowded room, the bartender couldn't possibly see everything that went on, even if he thought he did.

The young girl in the walnut panelled checkroom near the entrance was reading a paperback romance. On a night like this, there would be little to interrupt her fantasies. She might even reach the inevitable happy ending.

I wished I could say the same for myself.

"Do you know a woman named Maggie Shannon?"

She shook her head. "I don't know them all. Some don't check their coats."

"How about Toby Lang?"

"There isn't a woman in Fox River who doesn't."

"Did you see him leave last night?"

"He wanted to meet me when I got off."

"So he left alone?"

"For a change."

"Tell me something. Would

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he happen to wear a white silk scarf?"

Her eyes widened. "How did you know?"

"He sounds like the type."

When we climbed into the four-wheel drive, Carla said, "I hadn't considered the scarf. I thought it might be Maggie's."

"That's because you're not from Fox River. Silk is very dressy, but around here you settle for warmth and to hell with looks. Unless, of course, you want to appear a little different. I went through Maggie's closet. Nothing but sensible stuff."

"That's what she was," she said. "Sensible."

I had no answer to that.

The snow was beginning to drift. If no one else cared for it, the resorts would love it piling up on top of the thirty inches we already had. We were alone on the road, the streets smooth and unbroken by the passage of other cars. At the big highway depot outside of town, it was time to get the plows moving.

Toby Lang's address was an old house that had been converted to apartments. A snow-covered flight of wooden stairs, lighted by a lonely, uncovered single bulb that was a like a beacon in the swirling snow, led to the second floor.

We made our way up. Carefully.

The rock music from inside was loud, but not so loud that we couldn't hear the doorbell ring.

The door opened almost immediately.

Lang was a slightly less sophisticated verson of Gil Megaron, his hair dark, his handsome face rugged, and it was clear that we were not who he was expecting.

The smile faded. "You're Sheriff Gates. I've seen you around."

"This is Carla Donner. May we come in?"

He had a special smile for Carla. "Sure."

We stepped into the warmth of the apartment.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

"Tell us about last night."

"I don't know what you mean."

"I'm talking about Maggie Shannon."

"Oh," He walked a few paces away. "I heard about that. Terrible. What makes you think I know anything about it?"

I'd been prepared to dislike Toby Lang before I met him. He was making it easier.

"Maybe I see things in a crystal ball," I snapped. "What the hell difference does it make? You drove her home."

"Oh, that. I drove her home, sure, because her car wouldn't start. That's all I know."

"Okay," I said. "You can call a lawyer from the office."

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His forehead showed perspiration. "Wait a minute. Can't we be reasonable about this?"

"Sure," I said. "You can tell us all about it from the beginning, but you have the right to remain silent. You don't have to answer any questions at all."

"I have nothing to hide. I told you, all I did was help her."

It was going to be a long night.

I put the cuffs on him, took him in, and sat him down alongside my desk.

Little by little, we got it out of him. I did most of the questioning, with Carla circling like a shark and darting in and out, drawing blood most of the time. She was good at this sort of thing, really good.

As the story developed, Lang had been after Maggie for a long time, but she had no time for him. Any other man would have backed off, but his ego wouldn't permit that. He kept looking for an opening. He'd found it the night before. He'd noticed her trying to start her car and had offered to look under the hood. While he was looking, he'd pulled that coil wire loose, making sure there was no way she could ever start the engine. In the dark, she'd had no idea of what he'd done, and probably wouldn't have thought anyone could be so low, anyway. Playing the gentleman, he'd offered to drive her home, thinking that all he really needed was the opportunity. Once there, he'd made his pass and been thrown out for his efforts, which accounted for the loud voices that Garrett Hill had heard.

It just could have been that way, but his story had enough holes in it to warrant locking him in a cell overnight. Even if it didn't, pulling that coil wire irritated me enough so that I would have done it anyway.

When I returned to the office, Carla was leaning back in her chair, fingertips massaging her temples.

"What do you think of Toby Lang?" she asked.

"As he says, he could have left that scarf behind when she threw him out, but he can tell a rather convincing lie."

"He could have lost his temper when she turned him down. He's used to getting his way with women and can't stand rejection. That's why he wouldn't give up on her."

"It wouldn't be the first time a woman ran into that, but a couple of things bother me. One is that open window. He says he knows nothing about it. The other is that Maggie was wearing a nightgown and a robe. She'd never change into those with a guy like that in the apartment. He'd take it as an invitation."

"What you're saying is that

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someone came in after he left. If you're right, then we have nothing."

"Not necessarily. What we need is someone that Maggie would allow into the apartment dressed the way she was, someone she knew well and was comfortable with. She wrote to you. Ever mention anyone like that?"

"Not that I remember. Might be someone she worked with."

"Well, we'll give it some thought and check it out in the morning. I suggest you get some sleep in the other cell."

"How about you?"

I patted the arm of my chair. "This will do nicely."

She appeared tired as she headed toward the cell. She'd been up early, fought the snowstorm, wrecked her car, and then found her friend dead. One day like that in a lifetime is more than enough for anyone, and maybe that was why she had shed no tears for Maggie. She was still in shock.

I filled my coffee cup again and sat, feet up on my desk, watching the snow swirl outside. It appeared to be slackening off a little, which meant driving would be almost back to normal in the morning.

I finished the coffee and sat there, dozing on and off, the day's events marching in review through my thoughts.

If Lang was lying, then we had him and had no reason to look any further. But if we accepted his story, then there had to have been someone else, and that would be almost impossible to prove without a witness.

I wanted it to be Lang. Life would be a lot easier if it was, because if it was someone else, I was looking at days of slogging around, asking the same questions over and over and perhaps coming up with no answers at all.

The thought was depressing.

At dawn I made a fresh pot of coffee. The snow had stopped but the clouds still hung low, making the day a dull gray which approximated my feelings.

Julio came in an hour later. "Roads are a little icy but clear. How did you make out last night?"

I jerked a thumb over my shoulder.

"We have a guest named Lang in the back room."

"Is he the one?"

"Maybe. I'll know for sure later, but let him stew while I check it out. I can't think of anyone who deserves it more."

Carla heard our voices and came into the office. A restless sleep hadn't done much for her.

"How about breakfast?" I asked. "Then you and I will make a call."

"Where?"

"You can ask questions later."

When we left the diner, I

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headed for the apartment complex.

"Something you forgot to check, I suppose," she said.

"Something like that."

"And you're not going to tell me."

"I don't want to embarrass myself."

"I can't imagine your ever doing that," she said dryly.

"As a matter of fact, I'm notorious for it."

Inside the building, she headed for Maggie's apartment, but I caught her arm. "This way." I steered her down the hall and rapped at a door.

I had to pound rather hard before it opened.

Garrett Hill, his hair mussed and a robe pulled over his pajamas, obviously didn't like being wakened at that hour of the morning. He passed a hand over his face wearily.

"Sheriff Gates. What can I do for you?"

"I learned something I thought you should know. Can we come in?"

He retreated into the room.

Carla closed the door.

"What did you want to tell me?"

"Did you know a silk scarf holds fingerprints?"

"I don't see what that has to do with me." He patted his pockets as though looking for a cigarette, then opened a drawer and spun quickly, a black automatic in his hand.

I stepped in front of Carla. "What good is that going to do?"

"Buy time. I'll tie you both, gag you, and leave you here. By the time you get loose, I'll be out of the state. Get your hands up, Gates. I've heard you don't carry a gun, but I don't trust you."

I raised my hands. "One thing I can't find an answer for. Why did you open the window?"

The half grin said he wanted to tell me so that I'd know how clever he'd been. "Because with the body cold, it would be impossible to determine the time of death."

"Then you didn't go to her apartment to check on her after you heard the argument."

"I figured that since things had quieted down, she was all right. To be sure, I went over about seven. She told me what happened. She was laughing and said something about why all men couldn't be harmless like me, so I decided to show her I wasn't harmless. I grabbed her. She thought it was some kind of joke and kept laughing."

The voice rose. "I had to stop that. She'd been laughing at me for months. What did she think I was? I'd seen some of those clods she went out with. No better than me. Nothing special. But me. Fine to talk to but not to go out with. Who was she to

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laugh at me, anyway? I picked up the scarf the guy left and the next thing I knew she was dead."

"And that was five hours after Toby Lang had gone."

"I knew it would never get by Dr. Blenheim when he performed the autopsy. So I opened the window and hoped no one would find the body for a few hours. That cold air would make it hard to determine the exact time she died."

He waved the gun. "Time to tie you up." His left hand fumbled the cord of his robe free and he tugged at it. It snagged and for a split second his eyes fell.

Carla's purse hit the floor and she was in a crouch, her service pistol thrust out before her.

"Drop it!"

His gun muzzle moved a fraction of an inch as though he intended to fight it out.

She fired, the plaster chipping away behind him.

He threw the gun from him and thrust his hands high, mouth working. *"Don't let her shoot me, Gates!"*

I didn't blame him at all. Her expression said she was looking for an excuse to do just that.

We buried Maggie Shannon four days later, the crowd of coworkers and friends small. Carla's face had been pale, but there were still no tears.

Hill had been wrong about Blenheim. By the time he was through calculating the temperatures and the other mysterious factors he took into consideration, he'd come rather close to the time of death.

In the meantime, Harry Oates had repaired Carla's Toyota, so there was nothing to keep her in Fox River any longer.

She'd moved into the vacant cell during the time she'd spent with us and had even worked along, filling in when Julio and I had to be out. She and Julio had become good friends, and that weight she'd been carrying since the first day seemed to have lightened a little.

She'd even laughed a few times.

She was in the cell packing when Julio left his desk to sit on mine. "We've needed another deputy for a long time. Why don't you ask her? She can do the job, maybe better than either of us."

"The thought has crossed my mind," I said.

"Then do it." He leaped to his feet as she emerged from the corridor and took her bag. "I'll put this in the car."

She stood for a moment, a slight crease on her forehead from some hidden worry, before she said, "One thing I must tell

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you before I go. Silk does not hold fingerprints."

I shrugged. "I've been known to lie before in the interests of justice. I had an idea he'd gone to her apartment to check on that argument, but I needed something to shake him up and that was the only thing I could think of. There he was, straight from bed, still a little groggy, and I implied I knew he'd killed her and was there to arrest him. It worked. What would you have done?"

"I don't know. I suppose that puts you one up on me."

"Since we're cleaning this up, let me ask you—when you fired, did you miss accidentally or deliberately?"

She smiled. "Now that puts *me* one up on *you*."

"Julio suggested I offer you the job as deputy."

"Julio? How about you?"

"I think it's the best idea he's had in years. Would you consider it?"

The crease on her forehead became deeper. "I've been thinking of getting out of this business altogether."

I'd been studying her for four days, so I thought I knew why.

"Because you can't cry for Maggie."

Her eyes closed as though in despair. "I can't seem to cry for anyone, not even myself."

"I know. You've seen it all and the victims have become cases and are no longer people because if you start thinking of them as people, you're afraid you'll wake up screaming."

"Something like that," she said dully.

"Don't worry about it," I said gently. "It's been called many names and the current one is burn-out. All you need is a little support and understanding. You expected to get those from Maggie, didn't you?"

"Yes," she whispered.

"Well, now you have Julio and you have me. If I thought you were beyond hope, I wouldn't have offered you the job. You have far too much going for you for it to last. When you least expect it, you'll cry for Maggie and all the rest, and when that happens, you can decide if you want to stay where you are or come up here."

I escorted her to her car and Julio and I watched her drive off.

"Well?" asked Julio.

"She'll let us know."

"When?"

"When she cries for Maggie Shannon."

"That could be a long time."

I pointed. "Or a very short one."

Her car was coming back slowly, weaving down the road. It is hard to drive straight when your eyes are filled with tears.

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The Four Nets of Angelo

by Thomasina Weber

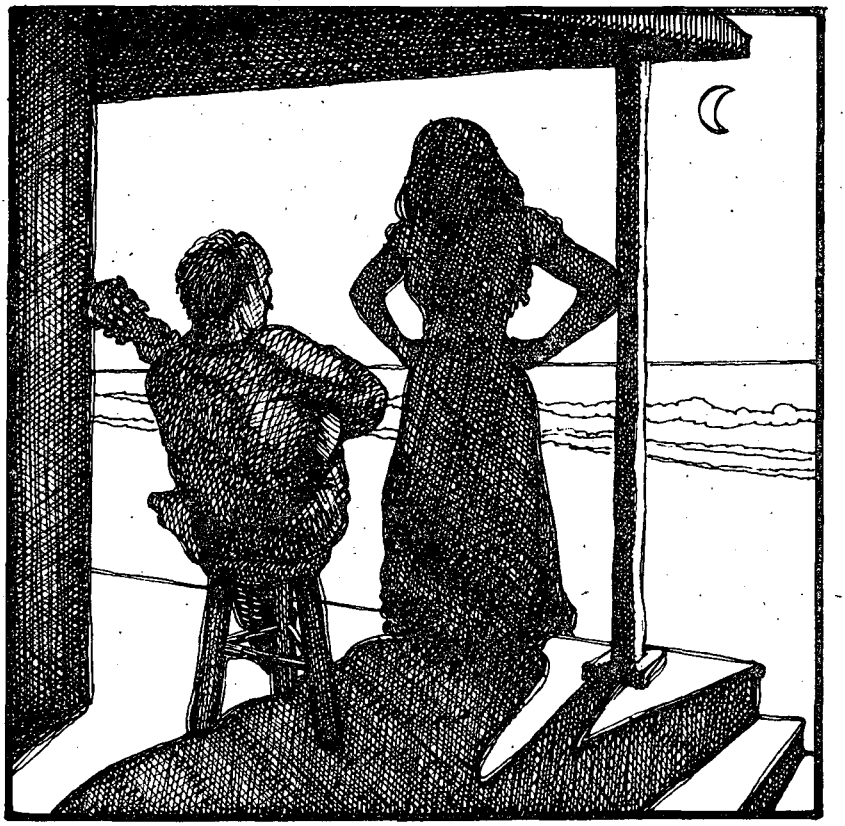


Illustration by Lisa Knouse

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Angelo sat on the step of the porch and picked at his guitar. Inez, the stringed one, was a part of him. By turning his head to the right, he could see the rolling swells as they visited the lonely beach in the moonlight. By turning his head to the left, he could see through the open door of the rough wooden shack where his bride of two weeks scrubbed at the chipped dishes while his brother Juan hovered close, a rag in hand to wipe them dry. Angelo tipped his head back and stared at the sky, trying to listen to his groping melody rather than the whisperings and snatches of laughter from inside.

Maria was a beautiful creature of velvet eyes and tawny skin and black silken hair. Angelo remembered that night he had first seen her, a lovely stranger in the village.

"It is Angelo," they told her, "a lowly shrimper like us, but wealthy beyond belief. He is the only one of us to have a treasure."

Maria had glided toward him, her skirt swaying as if it were alive of itself. And then she was against Inez and he could feel the warmth of her on the back of his stilled hand. As he looked deep into her eyes, he could hear the rhythm of misty waterfalls and the anthems of heaven. Later he had played for her, and Inez's golden throat must have sung a magic melody indeed, for now Maria was his wife.

"Juan! Let me go!"

Angelo looked around to see Maria dancing away from his brother, her face alight. Perhaps if Maria had met Juan before Angelo, she would be his wife instead. Juan was very handsome. And Juan was young, like Maria.

All their lives they had dragged for the large Mexican shrimp. They were wealthy, he and Juan, because they owned four nets. But last week one had been damaged, and Angelo sighed as he thought of it lying in a ragged heap behind the shack. Juan had no time now for mending nets.

Angelo got to his feet and entered the shack. "Come," he said. "The shrimp are waiting. It is time to go."

Maria was in bed when he returned, but there was the feeling as if she had leapt under the covers upon hearing his footsteps. The room was disordered, as if someone had been interrupted in the midst of a search.

"How did it go, Angelo?" she asked in a drowsy voice.

"Good. *Los camarones* were running heavy."

Maria sat up in bed and stared across the room. "Where is Juan?"

Angelo glanced at the corner where Juan's empty cot stood. His

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brother had said he was going to build a shack of his own now that Angelo was married. It was a good thing he had not yet started building.

"He became entangled in the net." Angelo kept his face turned away from his wife. "I had to cut the net, but I could not pull him aboard."

"Oh, Juan!" she sobbed, her fists pressing into her cheeks.

Angelo crossed to the bed and stretched out. "I have only two nets now," he said.

For several days he stayed in the house, ready to do Maria's bidding should she ask. But Maria was quiet and her eyes were swollen from weeping. "Juan was so beautiful," she would moan at intervals. Angelo was saddened by the loss of his brother, but no one had the right to steal another man's love.

Angelo waited eagerly for a smile, a sign that Juan was forgotten. And then one day it came, one sunny morning as Maria prepared to go to the village. He was seated at the table watching her move about the room. She came up behind him and began to push her long, strong fingers through his hair.

"You find many things cast up by the sea, do you not?" she asked.

"Oh, yes. The sea holds many secrets."

"We are very lucky, you and I."

"We are, Maria. Especially me."

"Especially you, Angelo, for you have a treasure."

"Indeed I do, Maria."

Her fingers rubbed his scalp. It felt good. He let his eyes close.

"Where is your treasure, Angelo?" He began to move his head beneath the soothing fingers. Heaven was not in some unfathomably distant place. Heaven was right here, in Angelo's shack. A sharp tug at his hair snapped his eyes open. But Maria was not angry; she was smiling at him. "Where, Angelo?"

"Where what?"

"Where is your treasure, beloved husband?"

He laughed and pulled her around to sit on his lap. She looked down at her fingers, then wiped them on her apron. "You are my treasure, *querida.*"

She jumped to her feet, nearly upsetting his chair. "I must go to the village," she said abruptly.

When she returned, she brought with her Carlos, who had been away at sea. And so Carlos began to fish with Angelo. Carlos was even more handsome than Juan. His teeth were white and he smiled often. Working on the great ships had hardened his muscles

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and filled out his body and his eyes were always laughing in his swarthy face. Maria seemed to come alive again. She walked straighter. She wore her skirts higher and her blouses lower. She tossed her hair frequently and her voice took on a lifting sound. Angelo was glad she was happy again.

Angelo sighed and buried his toes deeper in the sand, still warm from the sleeping sun. It smelled like rain. Tomorrow, perhaps. The roof had a hole in it from the last storm. He had been telling Carlos to patch it, but Carlos could not seem to find the time. Ah, well, perhaps it would not rain. Angelo listened to the laughter and whisperings inside the shack and it was as if Juan had come back from the dead to live with them.

"Come," called Angelo, getting to his feet. "The shrimp are waiting. It is time to go."

That night when Angelo returned, he sighed heavily as he sat down on the edge of the bed. "I have only one net now, *querida,*" he said.

Maria's grief was loud and lengthy. Angelo lost count of the days, the weeks it lasted. But gradually Maria began to find many jobs for Angelo to do. There was the leak in the roof to be mended. There was a broken shutter to be repaired. There was the stove to clean.

One night he took Inez down off the wall and went out on the porch. Maria was clashing the dishes. She had seen him cradling his guitar, but had made no comment. He ran his fingers lovingly over Inez's dusty surface. *How I have neglected you,* he told her. *I have let Maria push you out of my life.* As his fingers wandered over the strings, Inez began to sing to him of far-off mountains, fragrant forests, and the green jewelled depths of the sea.

The door slammed and Maria came to stand above him, hands on her hips. "So, Angelo, you are back to your old ways."

"I thought you liked my music, Maria."

"Music is a waste of time, a refuge for idle fingers."

"Music is a light in the darkness."

"A man who has a treasure does not need music."

"Everyone needs music." Inez had never sung more sweetly. Angelo could almost see the places she sang of.

"Are you happy, Angelo?"

Angelo looked at his wife, her face smooth and soft in the moonlight. "You changed, Maria." Inez whispered in golden tones and urged him to listen.

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"Are you happy?" snapped Maria, leaning toward him, her dark eyes seeming to throw off sparks of light.

"No, Maria, I am no longer happy with you."

"But I am your wife, so we must stay together. Is that not so?"

"It is so."

"It is not so, Angelo. If you wish your freedom, I will give it to you."

He lifted his head in amazement. "You will?"

"Of course. But you must give me your treasure, Angelo. You have hidden it well."

"My treasure? You would take away my treasure?"

"Is it too much to ask, Angelo? Is your freedom not worth the price?"

Angelo said nothing. His fingers found Inez's throat and he caressed the strings.

Suddenly the guitar was snatched from his hands and, unable to move, he watched Maria bring the neck of the instrument down to crack and break on his head.

"Now maybe you will listen to me!" said Maria. "If you do not give me your treasure, I will stay here and make your life miserable!" Swishing her skirt in his face, she marched inside.

Carrying his broken guitar gently, Angelo went down to his boat. He had to get away, to mend his Inez, to think.

The sea calmed him. As he sailed out on the broad breast of the deep with only the stars for company, he thought of the vanished days when he had been content in the sun with his guitar and only the voice of the sea to speak to him. His eyes had been clear and he had been free. His soul had made many soaring journeys and Angelo had known life was good.

The sun was high as Angelo left the village, a bulging sack under his arm and a song on his lips. He entered his shack and lifted his carefully mended guitar off the wall. He placed Inez on the low stool where she would be out of the way. Then, removing the nail, he hammered it in the corner of the wall, placing another nail in the far corner. He stood back to survey his work, aware of Maria's curious eyes following his every move. Stepping outside, he returned a moment later with a torn net which he hung, one corner on each nail. Then he opened the sack and took out twine and a new shuttle.

"Aha! So you have finally come to your senses! You have realized that *un pescador* cannot exist with one net!"

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"I was happier with two nets than three nets, Maria. And with one net than two nets."

For a moment she said nothing. Then she laughed, a tight, high-pitched sound. "You always said you would not mend your nets until your last net was gone."

"True, *querida*. When this net is finished, I will have lost my other net."

The days came and went and one afternoon Angelo said, "Tomorrow night we use the old net for the last time, Maria. It will be a celebration."

Angelo was dozing on his boat when the sun went down the next evening. He stretched and yawned; there had been no call for supper. Smiling, Angelo walked slowly toward the shack. He mounted the steps to the porch. "Come," he said. "The shrimp are waiting. It is time to go."

The shack was empty.

Angelo sat on the step and picked at his guitar. Inez, the stringed one, was again a part of him. By turning his head to the right, he could see the sparkling swells as they visited the lonely beach in the sunlight. By turning his head to the left, he could see through the open door of the rough wooden shack, which stood silent and empty, the nearly mended net still hanging from the nails. A lone *pescador* needs only one net, and the one on the wall would make a fine place for the spiders to play.

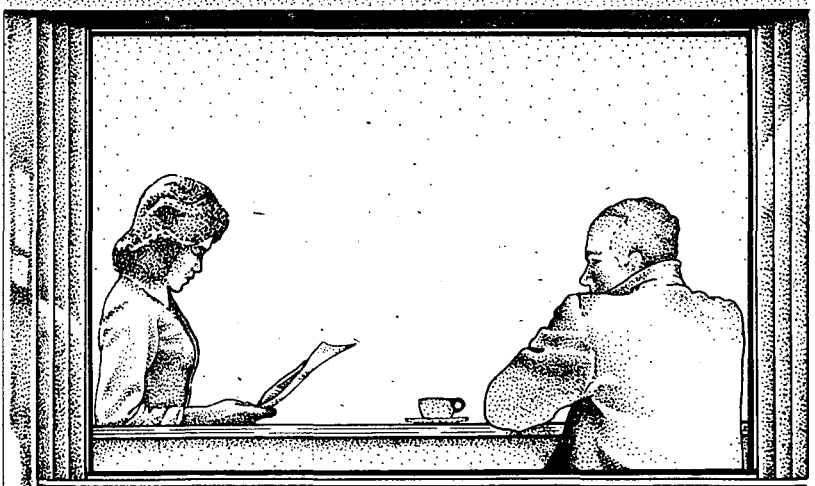
Inez's voice had a new quality, a poignancy, a memory of suffering. For Inez had suffered, first from his neglect and then from Maria's rage.

"Ah, Inez," he said softly, "I almost lost you. I would have been blind indeed had Maria extinguished my light." He stroked his guitar lovingly. "One should not try to steal the treasure of another."

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Closing Time



by Russ Martin

Jill's feet had reached the numb stage, and her calves were tight knots. The Seth Thomas hanging crooked on the wall told her it was nine fifty-five. Closing time was five minutes away. She could feel the dampness of her uniform under her arms, and she ached for a shower. The image in the

Illustration by Glenn Wolff

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mirror was that of a pretty girl of twenty-three, but at the moment she felt like a slattern of fifty. The mirror had to be wrong.

The grill was clean and the counter scrubbed for the night when the door swung open and the man came in. Jill was giving the toasters one last lick with a damp sponge when she felt a blast of cold air from the street and turned to see him enter. He was a very large man, at least a foot taller than her own five three. He wore a grey overcoat with a shadow plaid and large black buttons. His face was meaty but pleasant, with bulldog jowls that somehow looked as though they belonged on him and nothing else would have been appropriate.

"I'm about to close, sir," Jill said. She always felt nervous when a man came in late at night and she was alone, and more so when the man was the size of this one. She wished Ronnie had come a bit early to pick her up on this particular night. And then she realized that it wasn't early any longer, and Ronnie should have been there. The man stood in the space between the door and the counter stools, looking a bit forlorn.

"I just want a cup of coffee and a couple of those doughnuts," he said, pointing to the dish with the plastic cover. There were three lonely crullers left inside: a nut, a glazed, and something with purple frosting and coconut. The man pulled his left hand out of his overcoat pocket. "I won't even ask you to make change," he promised, showing her a dollar bill that looked worn and overused. Jill smiled.

"I don't see how I could turn down an offer like that," she said. "But it is closing time, and my boyfriend will be here to pick me up at any moment." There. She had said it.

"The moment he shows up I'll vanish like a puff of smoke," the man grunted, burying one of the stools under his massive body.

"The coffee will have to be Sanka," she said. "I just cleaned out the urn."

"That's fine. I'll sleep like a baby on the plane tonight."

"Oh, you're flying somewhere tonight?" Jill asked as she went about preparing the Sanka.

"San Francisco."

"Cream and sugar?"

"Black, please, and strong enough to float an iron ingot." Jill decided that she liked the man. Now that he had told her a little about himself, he had become a person rather than a nameless something, and he was less frightening. Not frightening at all, really. Just a nice man from California who probably had a wife and three

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kids and a mortgage. She set the cup of coffee in front of him.

"Is that where you're from?" she asked. "San Francisco?"

"A little place near there. Bodega Bay." He took a cautious sip of the steaming Sanka and put the cup down. Jill carried a salad plate over to the doughnut container and lifted off the plastic cover.

"Which of these do you want?"

"What kind of shape are they in?"

"Well, you know." She moved her hand back and forth in a so-so signal.

"Give me the nut and the frosted. Glazed doesn't hold up as well." Jill pulled a piece of tissue paper out of the box under the counter and transferred the doughnuts to the plate. As an afterthought she put the glazed with the others.

"Leave it if you don't want it," she said. "It's on the house. Since you're not making me make change. And since I'd only have to throw it away tomorrow otherwise."

"Thanks, that's real thoughty of you." He took a bite of the nut doughnut and tried the coffee again. It was still too hot. She noticed that he could barely get his index finger through the cup's handle.

"So you're Jill," he said, taking another bite of the nut doughnut. It startled her until she noticed that he was looking at her name tag, pinned to the front of her uniform.

"That's me, most of the time," she said, and glanced at the crooked clock again. Where *was* that man?

"You're a very pretty girl, Jill," the man said. When she looked at him nervously, he smiled. "Don't worry, I'm no masher." The archaic word lent a quaintness to him that allayed her nervousness. He took another sip of the coffee. "I thought that stuff was never going to cool down. I was about to forget my upbringing and blow on it."

"Don't hesitate on my account." It sounded sharp in her own ears, and she smiled to soften it. But he seemed to have taken no offense. He devoured the rest of the nut doughnut and then picked up the frosted one.

"Ronnie always could pick them," he said. "But I think he outdid himself in your case."

"You know Ronnie?" She looked at him expectantly, ready to smile.

"Oh, hell, yes. Ronnie and I go back a long way. You know, these doughnuts aren't bad? I like them a little tough."

"Is this some kind of a gag you and he cooked up?"

"No chance. If Ronnie even knew I was in town, he wouldn't be." He pulled a napkin from the dispenser and wiped his fin-

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gertips on it in a gesture that was almost elegant.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

The man reached into his overcoat pocket and took out a yellowed newspaper clipping which he shoved across the counter. Jill glanced at it involuntarily, then looked again. There was a photograph at the top of the clipping, and she couldn't doubt who it was. The hair was longer, and he didn't have a mustache, but it was Ronnie. The man turned the clipping around so she couldn't escape reading it. BAY MAN SOUGHT IN SLAYING OF WIFE, it said. Jill's blood ran cold at the sight of it, as though cracked ice had suddenly been injected into her veins.

"Who are you?" she asked with a mixture of resentment and pleading in her voice. He had finished the frosted doughnut and was biting into the glazed.

"William Tucker," he said around a large mouthful of the pastry. "Sergeant Tucker, actually. Bodega Bay Police."

"And you came all this way after Ronnie?"

"In a way."

"You're a little bit out of your jurisdiction, aren't you?"

"Well, this isn't what you'd call an official visit. Anyway, your boyfriend isn't wanted only in California. There are warrants out on him in connection with several homicides. All young, pretty girls who had formed an emotional attachment to him. Girls have a way of falling in love with him and then dying." He finished the glazed doughnut and wiped his hands again. Then he picked up the dish and wiped it all over, top and bottom and rim, very carefully. He set the dish on the counter, holding it with the napkin. Jill stepped closer to the counter and looked at the photograph more carefully. No matter now hard she tried, it wouldn't be anyone but Ronnie.

"I can't believe Ronnie would kill anyone," she said, doubting her own words as she spoke them.

"I'll have to go along with you there, Jill. He wouldn't have the nerve to swat a rabid fly." The cop finished his coffee, then wiped off the cup the same way he had the dish.

"You don't believe he killed those women?" Jill asked eagerly.

"What I believe doesn't count, honey. Several police departments and the F.B.I. believe he did it."

"But you don't? You really don't think he did any of it?"

"No, he didn't kill any women. Actually, the wife was an accident. I went over there to deliver something Ronnie had left at the station house. She asked

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me in and I guess I read her signals wrong, or else she decided to have a little fun with me. She was a real bitch. Everyone on the force knew that, and felt sorry for Ronnie. Anyway, when I made my move she panicked and started screaming, like she thought I was going to rape her or something. And then—" He laid his hands on the counter, palms up, and looked at them with an interested expression, as though they were in no way connected to him. "Damn things are too strong for their own good." Jill looked at the cop blankly. The things he was saying were only vaguely registering in her mind. "Anyway, nobody knew I was there, and I knew Ronnie would be home at any moment. So I split. And Ronnie reacted perfectly, from my point of view. He skipped town. Of course I knew that even a gutless wonder like him would come back as soon as he'd had time to think. He was never much of a cop, but he knew that much. Then I had this brilliant idea, see?"

He leaned across the counter in a conspiratorial manner. "Keep him running and make a Jack the Ripper out of him. A legend in his own time. The kind of guy sociologists and psychologists write about. Then no one would doubt his guilt, and maybe he'd even start to wonder about it himself." He wiped at the doughnut crumbs on the counter with his wadded napkin.

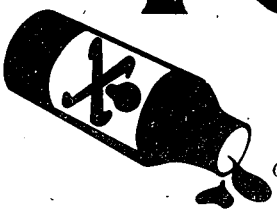
"I traced him to San Francisco where he was shacked up with a cocktail waitress," he continued. "Then to L.A., where it was a beauty operator. What do you girls see in him, anyway?" He didn't wait for a reply. "From there it was Chicago, Dallas, a couple of small towns in the Dakotas, and then here."

Jill had forgotten all about the pain in her feet and calves. But they were like lead weights now. There was no way she could move them. The cop from Bodega Bay glanced at the crooked clock.

"Well, he ought to be just about through fixing those two flat tires I gave him. He'll be here in a few minutes." His hands, which were still lying on the counter, jumped to Jill's throat with the speed of striking adders. He held her at arms' length, keeping her nails from reaching his face. They slid uselessly off the slick material of his sleeves. Her twisting body and flailing limbs swept the cup and dish from the counter, shattering them. Her struggles were like those of a mouse whose body has been broken in a trap. That first powerful and expert grasp had snapped her windpipe. After that he only had to hold her until she was still.

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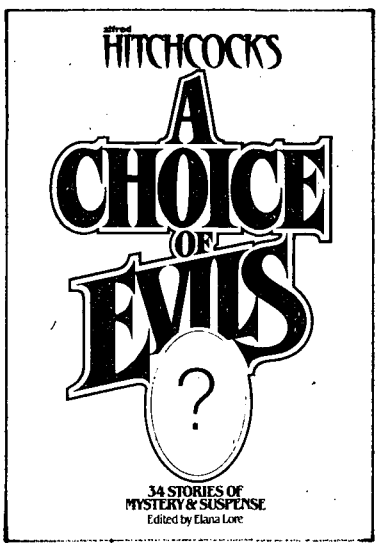
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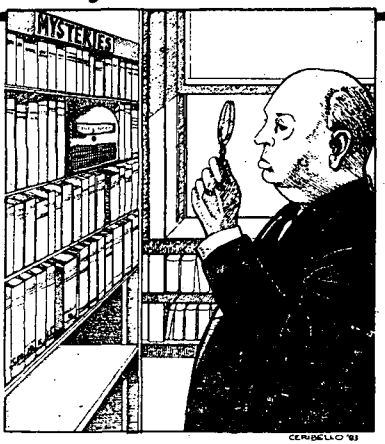
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OFF THE RECORD

Radio Eyes

by Ron Goulart



There was a second of dead air and then Philip Marlowe said, "Get this and get it straight. Crime is a sucker's road and those who travel it wind up in the gutter, the prison, or the grave. There's no other end . . . but they never learn." It's a Saturday night in 1949 and Marlowe, coming to life "from the pen of Raymond Chandler, outstanding author of mystery," is about to fill another half hour of air time with sex, violence, wisecracks, and hardboiled detection. He was one of dozens of tough private eyes who flourished on radio in, roughly, the years from the end of World War II to the start of the Korean War. What killed the radio eyes in the 1950's was, of course, television, which also managed to bump off all drama and comedy from radio as well. Although the heyday of the radio eyes lasted less than a decade, it managed to produce quite a few memorable private detective shows. Among them were those devoted to the hardboiled exploits of such as Marlowe, Sam Spade, Richard Diamond, Pat Novak, and Mike Shayne.

In 1944, Dick Powell was forty years old. He'd been a movie crooner for well over a decade, in films like *Forty-Second Street, Gold Diggers of 1933,* and *Dames,* and he was anxious to change his image. After trying to land the lead in *Double Indemnity* and losing out to

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Fred MacMurray, Powell won the role of Philip Marlowe in *Murder, My Sweet.* Based on Chandler's second novel, *Farewell, My Lovely,* it was a hit and is still considered one of the best, and most faithful to the original, Marlowe films ever. The movie opened up new job opportunities for Powell, ones that didn't require warbling or dimples. Besides making more tough guy movies, he also branched out into the radio detective business. In June of 1945, he starred in a one hour adaptation of *Murder, My Sweet* on the *Lux Radio Theatre,* thus making him the first radio Philip Marlowe. The radio version toned down the movie's violence and tough talk some, even going so far as to change Moose Malloy's classic description of his lost love. On the screen he had said she was "as cute as lace pants," but over the air she came out only "as cute as a bug's ear."

Around that time, Dick Powell also began a weekly series about a private detective created especially for radio. Sponsored by Fitch Shampoo, he starred as Richard Rogue in *Rogue's Gallery.* Like the Chandler novels and the Marlowe movie, this show told its stories in the first person. "I opened the door and walked in. Then I felt like walking out again. Because I saw Joe Dale lying there making a red stain on the white living room carpet." Although it was tough and violent, *Rogue's Gallery* also displayed a quirky sense of humor. One feature, which mixed violence and humor, was the bop on the skull that Rogue managed to collect during each and every investigation. "I went out like a match in a bucket of water. And when I opened my eyes I was on Cloud 8." Sharing the cloud was a gremlin named Eugor (Rogue spelled backwards) who delighted in taunting the battered detective about how he was botching the current investigation and asking rude questions like, "Don't you get tired of getting hit on the head?" When it came time for Rogue to awaken, Eugor would shove him off the cloud. Powell dropped out of the show after about a season, but *Rogue's Gallery* continued with Barry Sullivan and then Paul Stewart. The spring of 1949 found Dick Powell back on the air as yet another tough sleuth. Or at least semi-tough. On *Richard Diamond, Private Detective* there was more humor and less violence. Powell was even able to sing every so often. A writer and sometime director of the show was Blake Edwards, who some years later got together with Peter Sellers to turn out the Inspector Clouseau films.

Philip Marlowe returned to

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radio in June of 1947, as a summer replacement for Bob Hope. Perhaps we ought to explain here, for our younger readers, that there was no such thing as a rerun in radio. In order for Hope to take a vacation, Pepsodent Toothpaste had to fill his Tuesday night time slot with something else. They chose Marlowe, "the screen's most famous private detective," and hired Van Heflin, "MGM's brilliant and dynamic young actor," to portray him. The year before, Humphrey Bogart had appeared in the movie version of *The Big Sleep,* and quite a few people did know who Philip Marlowe was. Although Raymond Chandler had nothing to do with the show directly, many of the scripts for the thirteen-show series were adapted from such short stories as *Red Wind* and *Trouble Is My Business.* Fairly faithful to the spirit of Chandler, the program was talky and slow-moving and the plots a bit too intricate for the half hour format. Heflin brought a certain flippant toughness to the role, yet he often sounded sour and impatient. Come September 9, 1947, the show signed off, and Pepsodent never had anything to do with Philip Marlowe again.

A much livelier, and somewhat less faithful, Philip Marlowe program came to the air in the fall of 1948. The first broadcast, another adaptation of *Red Wind,* opened cold, with no music and no announcer. "It was hot, boiling hot that night," says Marlowe. "I wanted to grab a beer and turn in early. So what happens? I get my beer, but with it comes a gunshot, a beautiful woman in trouble . . . and murder." This CBS Marlowe show was produced and directed by Norman Macdonnell, who was also responsible for *Gunsmoke.* It starred Gerald Mohr, veteran of both radio and movies. Mohr, who brought the right mix of toughness and cynicism to the part, had had a varied acting career up to that point. He'd worked in New York theater with Orson Welles, played villains in Republic serials and been the Lone Wolf in a series of B movies. He was also one of the most active of Hollywood radio performers, playing detectives and hoodlums with equal ease. He'd even played murderers on several of the *Rogue's Gallery* shows. The Philip Marlowe he portrayed was rougher and less thoughtful than the Marlowe of the novels and given now and then to threatening suspects with a beating to get them to talk. While he went in for wisecracks, he didn't use as many similes and metaphors. Even so, the show was an effective one, well produced and acted. The weekly cases took Marlowe

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from the mansions of the rich to the mean streets, involving him with vicious gangsters, corrupt cops, grasping females, and all the other trappings of 1940's hardboiled mysteries. Although never a front runner in the ratings race, *The Adventures of Philip Marlowe* managed to stay on the air until the fall of 1950 and then come back for one final run in the summer of 1951.

Michael Shayne made his debut in 1939 in *Dividend on Death,* the first novel in a long and lacklustre series by Brett Halliday and assorted ghosts. Mostly by chance, the character jumped into the movies a year later, and Lloyd Nolan starred in *Michael Shayne, Private Detective.* The movie Shayne didn't much resemble the book Shayne, and the radio Shayne, who came along in the fall of 1944, resembled neither. Played by radio actor Wally Maher, this Mike Shayne was just one more private detective, complete with faithful girl secretary, and his adventures were more lighthearted than hardboiled. Much tougher was a syndicated version that hit the air in the late 1940's. That one starred Jeff Chandler, who had also recently begun a motion picture career, and had Shayne "back again in his old haunts in New Orleans." Like many of his contemporaries, Shayne narrated his own exploits. "I heard the door softly close behind me. Without turning around I knew it had been a trap. Then I heard another sound. A gun was slowly being cocked." Jeff Chandler played Shayne as tough, goodhearted, and slightly dense. He got hit over the skull at least once per broadcast.

When CBS brought Sam Spade to the air in the summer of 1946, they touted him as "the most famous private detective of them all." That wasn't exactly true at the time. The only Spade novel, *The Maltese Falcon,* remained in print and Ellery Queen had put together a Hammett collection including the three Spade short stories in 1944, but neither Dashiell Hammett nor his Frisco private eye were at the height of their fame in that first year after the war. The biggest boost to Spade's stock had come in 1941 when John Huston's motion picture version of *The Maltese Falcon,* the third adaptation since the novel's initial appearance in *Black Mask* in 1929, became a surprise box office hit and collected several Oscar nominations. *Lux Radio Theatre* got around to doing an hour version early in 1943, and the first actor to play Sam Spade over the air was none other than Edward G. Robinson. Humphrey Bogart recreated his Spade role on radio in 1946 in a tacky and

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inept half hour version for a shortlived show called *Academy Award*. In keeping with the growing trend for first person narration, the program had Spade telling his own story. "My name is Spade, Sam Spade," Bogart begins. "License number 357896, issued by the Police Department of San Francisco. Occupation, private detective, sometimes known as private eye." Bogart describes his first encounter with Brigid in these words: "This slick dame comes to see me one day, gives me a song and dance about her sister and a guy named Floyd Thursby."

Fortunately for the reputation of Samuel Spade, *The Adventures of Sam Spade, Detective* also commenced in 1946. While this latest radio Spade was not exactly Hammett's Spade, he was a tough, whimsical, and appealing operative, and the show was a success. It was produced and directed by William Spier, who was also one of the men responsible for *Suspense*, and written, for the most part, by Gil Doud and Bob Tallman. It was very much a post-war program, irreverent and cynical. But rather than being dispairing and gloomy, it was more often funny and wacky. Young Howard Duff, who hadn't yet begun his movie career, let alone his television career, was cast as Spade. He had a distinctive radio voice, could sound tough and still get the most out of a gag line. Duff was not above adlibbing from time to time. His secretary Effie was played by Lurene Tuttle, the best Effie in any medium. Once again the half hour stories were told in the first person. To Sam Spade a beautiful girl was almost always addressed as "sweetheart," and a case was never a case but a caper. "Stay right where you are and I'll be down to dictate my report on the Apple of Eve Caper," he'd instruct Effie during an opening phone conversation, or, "Now stay right where you are, I'll be right down to mix up my report on the Dry Martini Caper. Get it?" Duff left the show in 1949 and was replaced by Steve Dunne, who wasn't up to filling Duff's shoes. There was a network change, a loss of sponsor, and the program finally folded.

There were numerous other private investigators on the air in the waning years of the forties. Such tough ops as Brad Dolan, Martin Kane, Johnny Dollar, Frank Race, Jeff Regan, Johnny Madero, and Pat Novak came and went. Those last three were all played by Jack Webb before he struck it rich with *Dragnet*. All three of the Webb shows, no matter who was writing or directing, were a blend of violence, world-weariness, and parody. Madero and Novak

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operated out of San Francisco, Regan out of Los Angeles. Nearly everyone in their respective worlds was venal, nasty, and conniving. Many were also homicidal. Webb had but one friend he could trust when he was Novak and Madero, none when he was Regan. Jeff Regan, by the way, was the lowest paid of the radio eyes and earned just ten dollars a day plus expenses. The most audacious of the Webb shows was *Pat Novak, For Hire,* which managed to be one of the toughest and most downbeat of private eye radio shows while parodying the basic concepts and style of the whole hard-boiled school. The scripts, by Richard Breen, often sounded like manic spoofs of Chandler's prose. Novak was especially eloquent when describing women. "She was a tall girl, with thin hips and broad shoulders and she had everything a clothes horse needs except a saddle. She moved the same easy way a seagull follows a warm wind. . . . When she walked over to the door, I felt like a hummingbird trying to sneak out of an eagle's nest. There was something phony about the whole story and I had an idea things were going to be rough. At the door she turned and stared back at me. She was frowning a little and you couldn't tell anything from her eyes except the price of mascara. . . . Her legs were long and young-looking and they moved with an easy fluid motion, like warm honey pouring out of a jar." He wasn't bad at describing gents either. "I stood there in front of the door for a minute, trying to forget the guy's face. But it wasn't easy. It was square and pulled tight across the cheekbones as if they were trying to save money on skin. His suit fit him like the wrapping paper on a bunch of flowers and he needed a shave." The Novak show went off in 1949. By the middle 1950's most of the other private detectives were gone and radio was already shifting to the music, talk, and news makeup it has today. If you weren't around just after World War II, you missed the radio eyes altogether. Which is too bad.

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BOOKED & PRINTED

by Mary Cannon



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JAMES McCLURE

In the past year and a half, this column has profiled almost two dozen mystery writers, authors of ongoing series featuring ongoing characters. A glance through back issues confirms what mystery lovers have always known: namely, that the genre is replete with practitioners whose skill and talents as novelists are often the only qualities they have in common.

James McClure has stated that he deliberately chose the mystery field for his novels. He believed that serious, nonfiction books on a subject dear to his heart would be read by young people possibly, but ignored by their elders. And because his subject was South Africa today, it was important that his message reach its widest audience.

The Lieutenant Tromp Kramer novels by James McClure give readers a graphic portrait of modern South Africa. McClure was born there and lived there a number of years before moving to England. In his books, he portrays South Africa to the reader through an accumulation of telling detail. One feels that McClure has definite feelings about his native country; at the same time, he respects his readers' intelligence to the extent that he refrains from politicizing or preaching, or so loading the

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dice that readers could only draw a single conclusion. Instead, he carefully, methodically, tells his fascinating stories, presenting all views and allowing readers to come to terms with South Africa on their own.

To date there are six Lieutenant Tromp Kramer novels. Tromp joined the force in the mid-fifties, and has become a top investigator in the Murder and Robbery Squad of Trekkersburg (a fictional town of two hundred thousand). Kramer is an Afrikaner, which means he's of Dutch descent rather than "British"; he speaks the language Afrikaans, as well as English and some Zulu. He's described as "tall, broad-shouldered, with fair hair, high cheekbones, slightly protruding teeth and eyes like green marble." Women find him attractive, and he often returns the feeling.

He's intelligent but not intellectual, and has a strong streak of stubbornness.

To himself, he admits to a strong friendship with his Bantu detective constable, the delightful Zulu who is his partner. Mickey Zondi and Tromp make a smashing team, complementing one another in myriad ways. When alone, with Zondi driving their car recklessly through the streets, Tromp can discuss their current cases, confess his doubts, and benefit greatly from Zondi's insights and theories. Both men are relaxed, comfortable with one another, fully trusting. When others are present, however, Tromp turns into a gruff commanding officer, ordering the smiling Zondi around or talking about him disparagingly as if the black man were not two feet away. The Jekyll-Hyde relationship is shocking to the reader. What would it be like to live in a society that demands such play-acting, such deceit? This, says McClure, is South Africa. . . . Welcome.

And South Africa can be a very brutal place to be. These books are for adults only. They're graphic in their descriptions of the violence done in murder cases, and tough in their portraits of the police. Beating up prisoners during interrogations seems to be an accepted way of doing business in a South African precinct house. There's further harshness in the picture of that nation's caste system. Readers quickly pick up McClure's vocabulary, the speech of a nation that makes great distinctions between Boers and British, blacks and "coloreds," Indians and Asians—and men and women. The way of life in Trekkersburg gives Tromp enough money from his job to live in bachelor quarters, and still buy a house for the Widow

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Fourie (his long-standing lover) and her children; yet forces Zondi—who shares his lieutenant's dangers—to live in a two-room house with his loyal wife and several children, a home without electricity and with dirt floors.

Zondi—as important to these books as Tromp—is, of course, a superior Zulu who reads five languages. A "trim, neatly built Zulu, dressed in a zippy black suit with silver threads in it, and wearing a snap-down trilby," Zondi is a far cry from his fellows in starving rural tribes. In *The Sunday Hangman*, Zondi's livelihood is threatened by a leg wound that isn't healing quickly enough. Tromp tries to protect the Zulu's pride by ignoring the man's pain, and putting off his superiors' demands that Zondi pass a follow-up physical. The fact that Zondi stopped a bullet meant for Tromp makes no difference. At the novel's end, Zondi breaks his other leg, an accident that causes both men to break out in smiles. It means he'll have paid time off to recuperate, time that will give his other leg the only thing it needs to heal properly.

The plots of these books are multi-layered, complex, and fascinating. *The Steam Pig* (1971) has Kramer and Zondi investigating the murder of a young white music teacher whose past is mysteriously blank. A twist in this one takes the breath away. *The Caterpillar Cop* (1972) gets its name from a severed caterpillar that Zondi finds at the scene of the crime—the brutal murder and mutilation of a young boy. Paralleling the investigation of the white child's murder is a tale of the fate of a young black newsboy, whose curiosity also brings him to grief. *The Gooseberry Fool* (1974) opens when a churchgoing bachelor is stabbed to death on the hottest day of the year, right in his own kitchen. The subtext here is our heroes' fight to stay afloat on a stormy sea of interdepartmental politics. *Snake* (1975) opens with the apparent strangulation of a young woman entertainer by her trained snake, a python that's part of her act. The Widow Fourie's concerns about her adolescent son—and her discovery of the Oedipus complex in a psychology book she's reading — mirror the eventual solution to the snake charmer's demise. *The Sunday Hangman* (1977) takes Kramer and Zondi out to the country, where apparent suicides ominously begin to look like the work of a mad, avenging, self-styled executioner. The latest, *Blood of an Englishman* (1981), has the corpse of a visiting ex-RAF pilot turn up in the trunk of his wealthy sister's car.

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Racial prejudice, repressed sexual obsession, shocking inequities of wealth, a dangerous political climate—all are elements mixed with the mystery formula in these five novels. They are police procedurals, and as in all police procedurals, the Kramer-Zondi team spends its days dealing with the netherworld of violent crime, rubbing shoulders with the beggars and thieves and murderers of their community. One shouldn't read these books and feel that he knows the true—and only—picture of South Africa, of course. But the underworld is the mirror of its society, not the opposite; and in its repressed climate, South Africa seems a society ripe for murder.

Kramer himself remarks on the phenomenon in *Gooseberry Fool:* "He had seen a word in English-language newspapers that described it well: overkill. And overkill there was in the shantytowns and alleyways of Trekkersburg—with the country as a whole, its population 22 million, racking up 6,500 murders a year."

(These books were published in hardcover by Harper & Row, and several are available in Pantheon paperback editions.)

MYSTERY REVIEWS

Dotting bestseller lists across the country is **Who Killed the Robins Family?**, a short novel that was written by Thomas Chastain, and "created" by Bill Adler (William Morrow and Company, $9.95, 152 pp.). Its popular appeal is due in no small part to the silver banner slashed across the front cover which promises, "There's a $10,000 Reward for Solving the Crime—It could be yours!" The novel is snappy, albeit somewhat predictable, as one by one the members of the wealthy Robins family are bumped off (or disappear). Contestant-readers are asked to answer, in each instance, the who, where, when, how, and why; the winner will be the reader who comes closest to the correct solutions in the most cases. If you hate Lady-or-Tiger endings to your mysteries, then don't pick this one up, because—obviously—the answers aren't given in its pages. But if you read dozens of mysteries and have a good batting average at guessing the solutions, you might want to try for the jackpot. Hurry, though. The contest ends April 15, 1984.

Charlotte MacLeod has added a new title to her series set at Balaclava Agricultural College, and **Something the Cat Dragged In** again teams Professor Peter Shandy with his lovable crime-

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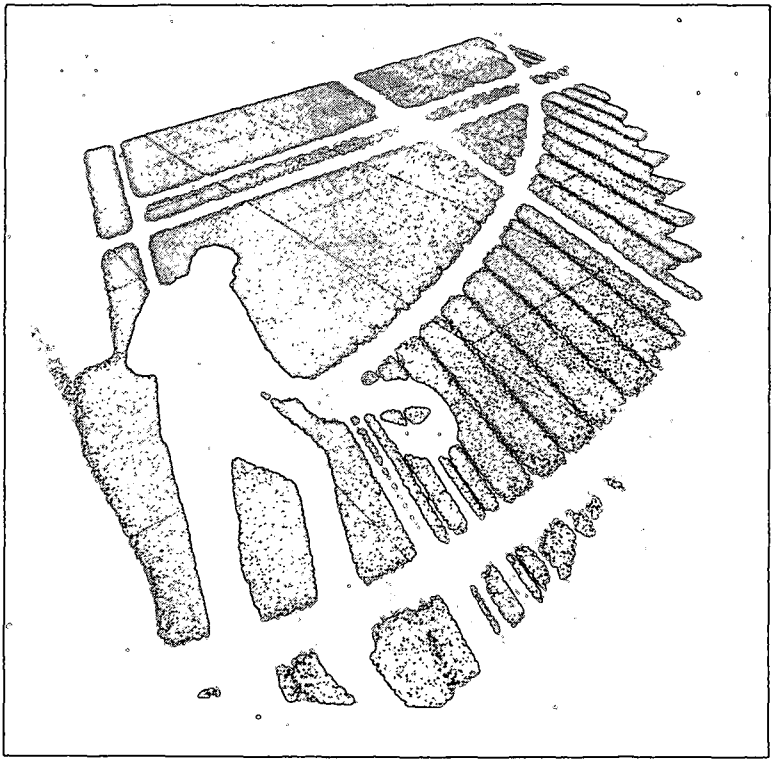
solving cohorts: his engaging wife Helen, the eccentric college president, and the president's zaftig wife, to name but a few. There's murder, of course, served up in a goulash of amateur-detective antics, local politics, and plain, old fashioned zaniness. It's not a dish to please everyone's palate, but it should tickle the fancies of these who enjoy MacLeod's British counterparts, authors who lace their mysteries with generous parts of implausibility and manic humor; and it will definitely please readers who loved *Rest You Merry* or the other two previous novels in the series. (Doubleday Crime Club, $11.95, 185 pp.)

The Copycat Killers was my own introduction to another series, that featuring "Uncle George" and authored by Hugh Pentecost. The setting, a small New England town called Lakeview, is fresh and appealing. The same is true of the protagonist, ex-lawyer George Crowder, known as "Uncle George" to the townsfolk because his worshipful young nephew bills him that way in all the tales he tells of his hero. The novel opens when Uncle George's dog noses out a corpse on the property, and George becomes interested in what—he fears—may be the debut of a copycat killer, a psycho who takes his M.O. from gruesome crimes splashed across the pages of newspapers in the past. This is a contemporary American mystery with a solid plot, lots of suspense, and a very appealing protagonist in the person of "Uncle George." And if you agree with me, you too can go back and read the first two books in this series. (Dodd, Mead, $11.95, 187 pp.)

Julian Symons is a name well known to most mystery readers, and his newest, **The Name of Annabel Lee,** shows the sure hand of a pro. The theme is age-old, reminiscent of *My Cousin Rachel* and *Laura,* and all those tales of obsession; but Symons updates it, adds his own special twist, and ends up with a very readable book. Perhaps its real charm lies in the character of Dudley Potter, a middle-aged, self-exiled British academic, buried in a small private college in New England. Annabel Lee is also British, a thirty-year-old free spirit, who comes to Graham College with an avant garde theater troupe. To his astonished delight, Lee (as she insists on calling herself) moves in with Dudley, and for several months this lone man knows the joys and pains of sharing his life intimately with a woman. All too soon, however, she disappears; bereft and anxious for her safety, Dudley follows her trail back to England. There he must face up to his own past—as well as risk his life to pry open the dark secrets in the heart of his lover, named, appropriately, after an equally dark heroine of Poe's. (The Viking Press, $13.95, 192 pp.)

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THE MYSTERIOUS PHOTOGRAPH



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Headed where, so stealthily?. . . . And for what dark purpose? We will give a prize of $25 to the person who invents the best mystery story (in 250 words or less), based on the above photograph. The story will be printed in a future issue. Reply to Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine, 380 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

The winning entry for the Mid-September Mysterious Photograph will be found on page 154.

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THE QUALITY OF MERCY

by Libbet Proudfit and Mary Monica Pulver

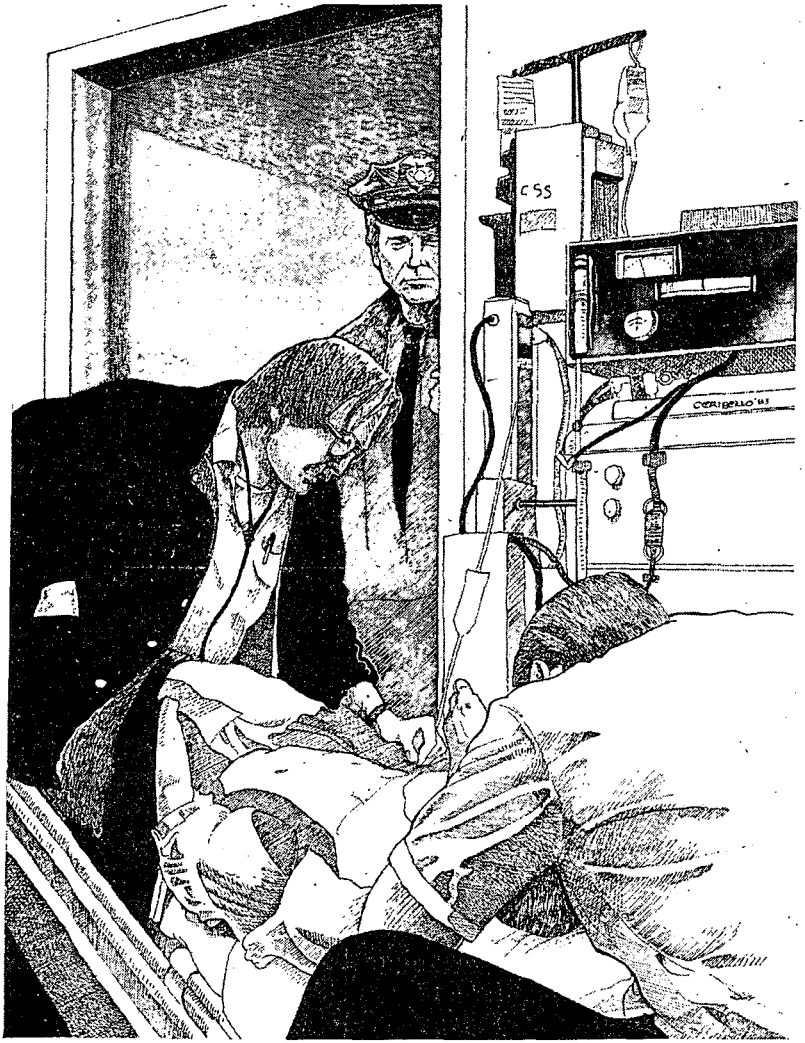


Illustration by Jim Ceribello

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Brichter punched the license number of the black Torino into his computer and continued to follow the weaving car while he waited for the glowing amber screen to tell him something. He was a uniformed cop of ordinary appearance, slimmer than average, with pale brown hair. He was working alone in a business area of Charter, near the airport. The drunk had pulled out from a side street without stopping and was now swooping dangerously at oncoming cars.

The screen abruptly advised Brichter that there were no wants on the car, that it was leased to Walter J. Smith of 1134 Oslo Street, who likewise had no warrants. Well, I'll be damned, he thought.

Brichter flicked on his red lights, and to his surprise, the Torino immediately sped away. He hit his siren and told Dispatch he was in pursuit.

Two blocks later he came bending around a corner to find the Torino had climbed the curb halfway down and hit a light pole, one of the old fashioned cast iron kind that don't break away. The car was steaming all over its crushed front end.

There was only the driver inside. He had spidered the windshield with his forehead and his face was a bloody mess. "Sorry," he apologized, as Brichter helped him out. He was a meek little man, dark and balding. He wiped clumsily at his face, spreading blood into his sideburns. "Terrible thing. Pay for the damage, of course." His breath smelled strongly of alcohol, but he didn't talk or move drunkenly.

"Yes, sir. Do you hurt anywhere besides your head? Your neck? Your back?"

"Huh-uh. Jesus, look at my car!"

"Yes, sir. May I see your driver's license, please?" Not that he needed to. This was Wally Smith, all right. Walter J. Smith, late of Smith's Drugs, was a celebrity in Charter. He'd been for years a nonentity, a Caspar Milquetoast complete with termagant wife. Then the wife died last year after a brief bout with cancer. Smith quit his hardshell Baptist church and became a Methodist. A vacation in the Bahamas, his first vacation in years, resulted in his purchase of an enormous potted palm which he kept in his store window. A chatty columnist saw the palm and wrote a story about a little man who wanted to live in an exotic tropic clime. It took a while, but fired by the cheers and encouragement of the whole town, Smith reached for his dream. His business was sold last week,

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and by the smell of him, his going away party had been a dilly.

"Gonna miss my flight," hinted Smith nervously.

Brichter checked his watch. "The Scooter to Chicago left a few minutes ago," he said.

"Oh, Christ; she'll kill me—!" He stopped abruptly, and said, "I didn't mean that."

"No, sir. Mr. Smith, you are under arrest for fleeing the police and for driving while intoxicated. I want you to accompany me to the hospital, to get that head taken care of; and while we're there I want you to have a blood alcohol level test. Do you understand?"

"C'mon, the cut's not that bad!" Smith fished for a handkerchief with a bloody hand and pressed it to his forehead. He pulled it away, looked at the result and hastily folded the handkerchief before covering the wound with it again. "If you let me go, I can still get to Chicago in time to catch my flight to Nassau." He smiled nervously. "Have a little mercy on a future beach bum, okay?"

"No, sir." Brichter led him back to the squad car, from which he produced a four by seven orange metal box. He fitted a clear plastic mouthpiece to it and asked, "Will you blow in this for me?"

"Hey, I've had a few, but dammit, I'm not drunk!"

"All right, show me. Blow in here."

Mr. Smith blew and the green pass light switched to red so promptly that Brichter reset the device and had Smith blow again. If anything, the change was faster. Scared apparently sober, thought Brichter, pulling loose his handcuffs—he was not going to drive to the hospital with an unfettered, scared drunk. Smith's eyes widened and, although he made no objection, fastening his hands reduced him to lip-licking silence.

A tow truck came for the Torino, and Brichter set off with Smith for County General Hospital. There, he parked and led his suspect across the parking lot to the emergency room.

It was a busy Saturday night; the long reception area was densely populated with people waiting for treatment or waiting for people being treated. Under an enormous sign that said, "ALL Emergency and Out Patients Must Stop Here" sat a middle-aged, competent-looking nurse with protuberant eyes and wavy brown hair. She was talking into a red phone.

"If your child has swallowed Inderal, I suggest you call Poison Control and bring him in," she was saying briskly. "Yes, I can give you the number. You're welcome." She hung up, turn-

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ing to smile at Brichter. Her plastic name tag said Jackie Bauman, RN. "Good evening, officer," she said formally. "What have we—Good heavens, is that Wally Smith? In *handcuffs?*" She reached for an eight by three card.

"Yes, he's been in an accident, needs his laceration looked at," said Brichter, unlocking the cuffs. "And I want a blood alcohol."

"If I miss my Nassau flight, officer, I'm going to be very upset," said Smith tightly.

"Blood alcohol? He doesn't look—" The phone rang and the nurse lifted the receiver. "County General Emergency Room. Nurse speaking." Her attention quickened. "How far out?" She wrote something on a pad. "Family coming? Just . . . just Mrs. Iver." She wrote again. "Got it, thanks." She hung up. "Obie, we've got a cardiac arrest due in about three minutes. I may have to help, so let's keep this short."

"Okay."

She looked at Smith. "Is your first name Wally or Walter?"

He stared at her.

"Huh?"

"What is your first name, please?"

He appeared distracted by some overwhelming thought or idea. "Walter James Smith," he said, and gave his address.

"Mr. Smith, who is your private doctor?"

"Samuel Lundquist." He looked at Brichter worriedly. "Think I'm gonna be sick."

Nurse Bauman instantly produced a kidney-shaped emesis pan. "Here," she said, pushing it into his hands, then spoke over her shoulder to a candy striper sitting behind her. "Jinny, take this patient back to Main Six." He was gone before he had a chance to splash the contents of his stomach on Nurse Bauman's clean counter.

She said to Brichter, "Maybe we can get him patched up in time to catch the late Scooter. Unless you seriously intend to take him downtown and book him?"

He said quietly, "Jackie, he failed the breath test. He nearly sideswiped a truck, and he wrecked his car in a getaway attempt. I don't care who he is, he's under arrest."

"Well, *excuse me!*" she said loftily. "Don't you want to go watch him so he doesn't try to run away?"

"He's too preoccupied with his upper digestive tract right now to think about escape. I'll be in the nurses' lounge when you need me."

Brichter walked through double doors into the back and turned left into a small room. It was at one end of a corridor

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splitting the emergency area in half. A tiny, pretty, dark RN whose long black hair was tied back with a plaid ribbon was in the room, drinking a Diet Pepsi and smoking a cigarette.

"Hi, Stephanie," he said.

"Don't talk to me," she snapped.

He smiled a sideways smile. "Why not?"

She displayed a forearm marked by two red semicircles. "A two-year-old bit me, and they won't let me impound him for ninety days to see if he's rabid."

The rest of the smile appeared. "Too bad."

"Yeah, well, find one night this week—two nights this month—that haven't been rough." She pulled on her cigarette. "I'll be stupid and ask: What did you bring in?"

"DWI. Ran into a light pole." He went to the twenty-cup coffee maker and selected a styrofoam cup.

"Ha!" she said crossly. "Serves him right. I hate drunks. Their breath is disgusting, and no matter where you stand, they breathe all over you."

"Stephanie to Red Room One," said an intercom voice. "Stephanie to Red Room One, please."

She quickly stubbed out her cigarette. "That'll be the cardiac arrest. I want to hear a nickel drop every time you fill that cup."

Brichter filled his cup and dropped a coin into the coffee can. He wanted very much to get closer to Stephanie, but whenever he tried she bristled with wisecracks. God, wait till she found out he'd arrested Wally Smith.

He sipped the hot, fragrant brew and began to wonder if there might not be repercussions downtown as a result of this arrest.

From the other end of the corridor there was the hissing sound of electric double doors opening and a cadenced count from a breathless man: "... and one, and two, and three, and four, and five, and one, and two ..."

A woman was begging, "Stop it, stop it; he's dead, can't you see that?" Other voices spoke. "Crissake, outa the way, can't you?" "Here, in here!" "Start ventilating—where's anesthesia to ventilate?" "I'm right behind you, doctor."

He wandered casually out to watch. He probably should go check on Smith, but this was more interesting. He remembered this sort of emergency from his paramedic days. It was nice to be able just to observe.

The patient was whipped into Red Room One, the cardiac room. Even as Brichter ap-

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proached, the wheeze-click of Thumper, the automatic CPR device, began. The woman's voice rose again, "Please, stop that! You're hurting him!"

A man ordered briskly, preoccupied, "Can someone take this woman away? Now?"

Two fire department rescue squad members and a uniformed policeman were conversing in the corridor. They glanced through the open door into the room but ignored the request. Jackie Bauman led a weeping woman out. The woman was streaky blonde and deeply tanned, exceptionally beautiful, dressed in bright blue silk. The nurse was speaking in a soothing undertone as they went down the corridor; the woman was shading her eyes with a trembling hand. The firemen and the policeman watched them go out a door.

"Ain't that a luxury item," said one of the firemen.

"Too rich for me," agreed the other.

"Oh, I dunno," said the cop, a veteran whose belly hung over his garrison belt. "Take her clothes off and whatcha got?"

"A lovely woman who wouldn't give us the time of day, Billy," said Brichter, stopping beside him. "What's going down?"

"Well, if it ain't the boy genius!" said Billy, with a broad grin. "You're an ex-nurse, ain't you? You tell me!"

Brichter's pale eyes glinted, but he said calmly, nodding, "I guess a man who shot an innocent garter snake because he thought it was a copperhead can't be expected to know the difference between a nurse and a paramedic. Was that a Mrs. Iver that Jackie just took out?"

"Yeah," said one of the firemen. "I think it's her old man in there on the table."

"Did you really shoot a deadly garter snake, Billy?" asked the other fireman gleefully, and Brichter, feeling he'd gotten more than even, walked into Red Room Two.

It was also an emergency treatment room, with a functional-looking wheeled table and glittering electronic machinery. Glass cupboards held the blue-paper-wrapped instruments necessary for doing diagnostic and resuscitative procedures.

To the left was a plate glass window that took up half the wall. There was a sink under the window and a paramedic was at it, wringing out a towel he had soaked under a high curved faucet. He was looking through the window, watching with professional interest the concentrated efforts going on next door to resuscitate the car-

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diac arrest victim. Brichter went to stand beside him.

"He had a down time of at least six minutes before we were called," said the paramedic, beginning to swipe at his spattered brown slacks with the towel, "and she didn't know how to do CPR. Rescue was there in three minutes and we were right behind them. Not a chance, Obie, not a wiggle, the guy was asystole, never got a thing." He began to rinse the towel and observed, "Down time was too long, he'll never make it." He wrung out the towel in a series of strong twists. "Why the hell don't more people learn CPR? She could've saved him. She said he had a bad stroke maybe seven months ago, but there was no history of heart trouble." He began to wipe at himself again. "He must've just finished dinner; he puked all over me."

Brichter looked through the window. The victim was a healthy looking man, somewhere in his middle fifties, naked except for electrodes stuck to his chest, his color a nice pink. There were six people in the room with him, crowding it without getting in each other's way. An orderly stood beside the patient, supervising Thumper, a C-shaped machine whose black foot was compressing the patient's breastbone, squeezing his heart. A sturdy nurse with copper curls was injecting drugs into the IV line. Stephanie was writing things on a clipboard, calling out the time and watching the monitor scrawl a crooked, humping line. The anesthetist, a homely lady in bluegreen operating room scrubs, was squeezing the ambu bag, breathing for the patient. A skinny young doctor with a close-cropped brown beard stood by the victim's feet, in tense conversation with the paramedic by the door.

"Did you ever get anything?"

The paramedic rubbed his sweating face—he'd been the one counting when they came in—and replied, "Asystole; just one long, flat line." He wiped his hand on his trousers.

"Nothing at all?"

"Not that I could tell."

Dr. Anderson swore and said, "Well, let's see what we got. Turn off the thumper."

The click-wheeze stopped and all eyes turned to the monitor, where a perfectly straight line was drawn in green across the bottom of the charcoal screen. Stephanie switched on the recorder and it began to emit paper with the straight line written on it.

"Restart," ordered the doctor. The wheeze-click began and again the peculiarly-shaped series of lumps crossed the screen,

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still interspersed by none of the sharp jags that meant heartbeat.

"Hell," said Dr. Anderson. "When was his last bicarb given?"

The paramedic said, "He's had two, the last one five minutes ago."

"Push another," the doctor ordered. "And an Epi. Maybe this is fine fib, not asystole." He glanced at the monitor on the wall. "Is the monitor at full gain?"

"Yup," said Stephanie.

"Epi and bicarb in," Coppercurls said, pushing the syringe.

"Seven fifty-three. No change, doctor," intoned Stephanie, writing.

Dr. Anderson looked anxiously at the screen. Sometimes the fibrillating heart was in a tremor so fine it could not be detected on the monitor. He turned to the anesthetist. "Linda, how are his breath sounds?"

Linda put her stethoscope in her ears and listened to each lung as she ventilated the patient. "Lungs clear bilateral." He had not inhaled any vomitus.

The patient was still looking very pink, but there had been no effort on his part to breathe or pump blood. And it had been at least forty minutes since his heart had stopped. "Stop Thumper." The line again became perfectly flat, a fact the recorder verified. If there were anything left of the man, the injections should have roused it. Dr. Anderson wiped his forehead. "Damn."

"Well, shall we call it?" asked Stephanie.

"Yeah," sighed Dr. Anderson.

"Seven fifty-eight," noted Stephanie, and wrote it down. This would be the victim's official time of death.

The tension instantly went out of the room. The recorder was shut off. Thumper was pulled out and put on the floor. Linda removed the ambu bag and began to pack her gear.

"Any family?" asked Dr. Anderson.

"I think that was his wife Jackie took out," said Stephanie. She turned off the monitor and began to collect the readout tapes while the sturdy redhead knotted and cut the IV lines. Stephanie took a white sheet off a shelf.

Linda, her work done, left, saying, "Don't call me for a while, okay? I've got two mothers in labor upstairs." Dr. Anderson went out behind her, bound for the family lounge and the giving of sad news. Coppercurls made a "too bad" grimace at Stephanie on her way out.

"I told you we'd never save him," said the paramedic to

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Brichter. The beeper in his pocket went off. "Christ!" he muttered, "Gotta run!" Brichter followed him less hurriedly out into the corridor, to find Billy and the firemen also gone.

He went to lean in the doorway of Red Room One and drink his coffee. "Who was he?"

"He didn't say." Stephanie was picking up used syringes from the counter, breaking off their needles and throwing the parts away.

"Dumb question?"

"I just treat 'em, Obie. I don't care what somebody calls 'em when they're well."

"Cherry Ames you ain't."

"Especially not when I'm childbit." She glanced at him. "Your eyes are gray, aren't they?"

"Yeah, why?"

"They're so pale they look almost silver in this light. Weird." Brichter did not think to retort—he really liked her—and she said, "Are you scared of bodies?"

"Not particularly. Why?"

"If you can find the strength to pry yourself away from that door, you might give me a hand moving him. The family will probably want to come take a look."

Brichter put his cup on a counter and came to stand across the cart from her. The man's shoulders were propped up, but his head had been arranged to hang back over the support to make a straight line for the endotracheal tube. Brichter lifted a flaccid arm and grabbed a shoulder. When she nodded, he heaved. The body slid heavily, then stopped short, and Brichter fell across the chest. "Hey!"

"What?"

"Funny smell, like nuts or something. On his breath."

"Obie, he hasn't got any breath."

"Well, take a sniff and see for yourself."

She bent over the quiet face and said, "Hmmm. Vomit and—okay, almonds? I think this will do. Better go check on your drunk." She turned away and began to unfold the white sheet.

Brichter sighed and walked back to the nurses' station and stuck his head in the door. "Suzy, how's Mr. Smith?"

"I might've known it was you who brought Wally Smith in. He's okay. They're stitching his head now in Main Six. Did you really have to arrest him?"

"Yes, ma'am."

One of the clerks at a desk up the way turned and said, "He smells strong, but none of us thinks he's even legally drunk."

"We're doing a pool on his B.A.," said Suzy, "so call us the results, okay? Dr. Holland says he's only a point oh six, but he

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always guesses low. Tommy says he's point oh eight, and I've got a dollar on oh nine. He better be one oh, legal, Obie, or the whole town is going to be asking for your head. Want to put your money where your handcuffs are?"

Brichter grimaced. "No, thanks." He didn't like drunks, but he didn't find this sort of game funny, either. Especially this time, since it included a swipe at him. Dammit, they were wrong. Smith's blood would test pretty high. It was the scare of the accident and the arrest making him seem more sober than he was.

"He'll be ready in about half an hour, Obie," Suzy said. "The tech will come get you to draw the legal B.A."

He glanced at his watch; that would put him well past quitting time. He'd have to call in soon. "Fine; I'll be in the nurses' lounge."

He went back to the lounge and refilled his cup, dropping a nickel ostentatiously into the can. He reached into his back pocket, pulled out his notebook and sat down. Brichter had an eye for detail and a cultivated habit of making frequent, thorough notes about on-the-job incidents. For the next few minutes he was absorbed in writing a careful account of Mr. Smith's apprehension and subsequent behavior.

A shadow appeared in the doorway, but he didn't look up until it made an exasperated noise. It was Stephanie. "Am I in your chair?" he asked.

She waved a clipboard at him as she approached. She was wearing a wreath of monitor strips and looking very grim. "I need the whole table—*if* you don't mind!"

"Sure. It's your lounge." He stood, closing his notebook. "You finally heard, then?"

"Heard what?"

"I arrested Wally Smith. He's my DWI."

"Oh, that. Jackie told me." She slapped her clipboard onto the table and went to open the little refrigerator under a counter. "Was he really drunk?"

"Stinking."

"No one else thinks so." She found a Diet Pepsi and popped it open. This fuss about Smith did not seem to concern her very much.

"If it wasn't my arresting Mr. Smith, what's got you mad?"

She came to sit down, kicking a second chair aside and putting her feet up on it. "That grieving widow—I don't think!" she said.

"No? She was crying and upset when I saw her."

"It was humiliation, Obie. She had in mind a dignified declaration of death at home and

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a respectable mortician taking the body away in a decent hearse. She found our resuscitation team and its efforts unseemly and common. You should hear her. I did, at length. Dr. Anderson left it to me to tell her the medical examiner might want to do an autopsy. She blew up all over me. Christ. I tried to tell her the M.E. gets a look at anyone who dies in the emergency room, but it was like trying to talk a Roman candle back onto the ground."

"I've heard of that reaction. It's normal."

"Hey, you've got to know this chick isn't sentimental. There have been stories about her ever since her husband had that stroke." She grinned. "I saw her myself giving old Wally Smith the treatment in a dark corner at the hospital's fundraiser in February. 'Oh, Wally, I think it's so wonderful when a man just reaches out to take what he really wants,'" she mimicked in a breathless little voice. "No, it's like he's her personal property, and we're bodysnatchers or something."

"Is she mad—or scared?"

Her thickly-lashed dark eyes glanced at him. "You're all cop, now, aren't you? Don't answer; I've got work to do." She pulled off a monitor strip and began to search along it.

He was silent, but watched her covertly, hoping she'd finish before he had to go back to his drunk. An unsentimental widow who didn't want an autopsy was always a matter of interest.

Dr. Anderson came in to get a cup of coffee, taking a ceramic mug out of a cabinet. "That was a stinker of a case," he remarked to no one, filling it and adding sugar and creamer. He put a coin in the can saying, "And he came in so nice and pink, too."

"Maybe he's normally high-colored," said Brichter, joining automatically in the verbal postmortem.

"Nah, I saw the guy a month ago; he was upstairs for an evaluation. No progress, poor bastard." He gestured with a thin hand. "You know him, Obie?"

"Never saw him before."

"Used to be in my racketball club. Late fifties but keeping himself in good shape for that new young wife. Sailing, travel, tennis, the works. Then pop goes a blood vessel and he's an intelligent cucumber." He came to prop a flat buttock on the counter and taste his coffee. "Well, maybe a little more. His speech was understandable, and he could move an arm. But no walking, much less racketball. And no poon tang, either, to keep the young bride at home. God, he must have hated that.

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He was fighting hard to come back, but the prognosis was bad. So maybe it was a mercy, huh? All the same, I would have thought we could have resuscitated him."

Stephanie looked up from her work. "After a down time of forty minutes? She'd've found the cucumber a real fireball next to what we'd've stuck her with."

"It wasn't all down time, Steffie. The squad got to him in nine minutes, and it was CPR all the way from then on."

Stephanie snorted and kept writing. This was a sore point among emergency room personnel, but one not often discussed. Why bring back someone whose forebrain is essentially destroyed, who will have no measurable awareness?

"Anyhow, that pink didn't look real," said Stephanie. "Maybe it was sunburn or something. From a sunlamp, maybe."

"No, it wasn't sunburn," said Dr. Anderson. "It was deeper than that." He smiled. "Almost as if he was blushing."

"A modest corpse?" remarked Stephanie dryly.

Brichter put down his cup, his hands suddenly cold. "Did you notice that smell about him, doctor?"

"What do you mean, what smell?" Anderson asked sharply.

"A nutty smell. What the hell do bitter almonds smell like? Because if I'm right, that would explain the pink, too, wouldn't it?"

"Cyanide," breathed Anderson. "Jesus, how would he get a dose of cyanide? No, Obie, that would make it murder! Are you sure about the smell?"

"Yes, it was very distinct."

Stephanie stopped rolling a monitor tape around her hand. "I smelled it, too, doctor. But what has his color got to do with cyanide?"

Brichter said, "The oxygen stays trapped in the blood, it can't get into the tissues. So the venous blood turns as red as the arterial, and the body glows a healthy pink while the victim suffocates at a cellular level."

"Christ, Obie!" she said. "Do you think that's what happened?"

"I'm going to go take a whiff," announced Dr. Anderson, putting down his mug and starting out of the room.

"See if Mrs. Iver is still in the family consultation room," Brichter called after him. "Damn, I wish Billy hadn't left. I'd like to hear what she told him."

"You think she did it," said Stephanie.

"I didn't say that. But there's a lot of money in the Iver family, you and the doctor agree

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she hasn't exactly been the devoted wife, and you said she strongly objected to an autopsy. It isn't good police procedure to let someone with that background walk off without a chance to explain herself. I think I ought to go talk to her."

Suzy stuck her head in the door and said, "Obie, if you want to get that blood alcohol, you better come now. We got a whole beach party of teenagers on their way in, so go sign the log." She ducked out again.

"Hell." Brichter thought briefly and asked, "Stephanie, is there some way to detain Mrs. Iver?"

She put down her work. "Far be it from me to keep you from putting poor Mr. Smith in jail on his last night in America!"

"Thanks. I'll come to her as soon as I finish up." He stopped at the nurses' station to sign the log and borrow a phone. He called the Safety Building to tell them about Mr. Smith, and listened patiently to a lecture from the watch captain, who had already received an inquiry from a local radio station that paid twenty-five dollars for news tips. Brichter asked for a team of detectives from Homicide to come over, and explained why. Then he went to Main Six.

The ten by six curtained-off area contained a wheeled cart, a shelf with examination equipment, and Mr. Smith. He was sitting up on the cart, gray and scared, a little man with a round bald head whose dark fringe was graying above his ears. The emesis basin, unused, was lying on his suitcoat, neatly folded beside him. There was a large bandage across his forehead, and the blood had been washed from his face.

Brichter said briskly, "Mr. Smith, we need a blood alcohol test. You have the right to refuse; however, if you do refuse your driver's license will be revoked for six months. Will you consent to the test?"

Smith asked nervously, "Is it Mr. Iver they brought in?"

"Yes. Will you—"

The curtain opened and a lab tech came in. "I'm here to draw your blood." He put his tray on the cart and began to roll up Smith's left sleeve.

Smith frowned as the tech wrapped a rubber tourniquet around his upper arm. He pulled his arm away.

"What do you think you're doing?"

"Drawing some blood, for the B.A." The tech, working quickly, rescued the arm and wiped off the inside bend of the elbow with a betadine swab, leaving an orange stain. He held up a vacuum tube syringe. "This may sting a little," he said.

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"What's the B.A.?" asked Smith.

Brichter sighed. "Hold it a second, Tommy. Mr. Smith, we want to take a blood alcohol test. You have the right to refuse the test; however, if you do, your driver's license will be revoked for six months. Do you understand?"

Smith stared at Brichter for several seconds, then said, "You already told me all that, didn't you?"

"Then we have your permission to draw the blood?"

"Hell, no! First of all, I'm not drunk. Second of all, I don't give a damn about a driver's license. I'm going to be walking the beaches from now on."

But Brichter was determined to have the test. "Tell him, Tommy."

"Tell him what?" asked Tommy, giving Brichter a look.

"About the pool. Betting on the results of the B.A."

Tommy said nervously, "It was just a joke."

"But you don't think he's drunk, either."

"Hell no! None of us does!"

"Here's your chance to prove me wrong in front of everyone," said Brichter to Smith.

Smith grimaced. "Attaboy," said Tommy encouragingly.

Smith held out his arm. "Take the blood."

Tommy said again, "This may sting a little," and inserted the needle under the skin.

"Ow," said Smith automatically. He stared a moment at the bright upsurge in the tube. "Uh," he said, tearing his eyes away to look at Brichter, "y'see, officer, I know Mrs. Iver. I mean, she brought Mr. Iver's prescriptions to me. Poor old guy's had a hard time of it. So when I heard her name out there I sort of wondered. That's why I didn't pay any attention when you first told me about the blood test. I mean, I don't know her as a friend or anything like that, but she's a nice lady, and life's been hard on her. So naturally I'm concerned."

"Sure," said Brichter, no longer in quite so much of a hurry. Smith sure was anxious to explain himself. "But your drugstore isn't in the Iver neighborhood, is it? Sort of inconvenient, I'd think."

"Bend your arm, please." The tech lifted Mr. Smith's bent elbow and put the blood sample into a small styrofoam box, which he handed to Brichter. "That's all, sir," he said insolently.

"I went all-generic on my drugs a year or so back," said Smith. "So my prices are low. Everyone likes to save money, even rich people." He cleared his throat. "He's dead, isn't he?"

"Yes, a few minutes ago."

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Brichter reached for his pen to mark the box and said, "I'm sorry you missed your flight to Chicago. Why don't you get someone to call and cancel your ticket to Nassau? You can make new reservations later."

"You're not going to let me go?"

"No, sir."

"I'll call the airline for you," said Tommy. "Or Suzy will. Or anyone, for that matter."

"Thank you," said Smith. He moved the emesis basin with trembling hands and fumbled in his suitcoat for the plane ticket, found it and gave it to Tommy, who put it on the tray. Smith asked Brichter, "How long will the rest of this take?"

"We're done here. I've got to check on one or two things and then I'll take you back to the jail and get you booked. You'll be free as soon as you make bail."

The tech gave Brichter a dirty look, then unbent Smith's elbow and put a Band-aid over the puncture site. "I'll let you know when the ticket's cancelled," he said.

"Thanks," Smith said.

Suzy came in holding a sheaf of papers. "Obie, Dr. Holland's decided he wants some X-rays of Mr. Smith's head. Can't send him out of the country with a concussion, can we? We'll take care of it. I'll come get you when we're finished."

Good, he wouldn't have to handcuff the little man to a drainpipe. "All right," he said, and hurried out.

The family consultation room was softly lit, deeply carpeted, and arranged with two distinct clusters of very comfortable chairs. There was a phone on top of a stack of phone books, and boxes of Kleenex were everywhere. In the grouping by the window, Stephanie was taking a very detailed history from Mrs. Iver, her voice quiet and gentle. Brichter stood in the open doorway a moment —he'd never heard Stephanie sound like that before—then knocked once on the doorframe.

Mrs. Iver's blue eyes widened at the sight of his uniform and she pressed a handkerchief to her pale mouth.

"Mrs. Iver," said Stephanie, rising, "this is Officer Brichter. He's been talking with Dr. Anderson about your husband's death. I think he'd like to ask you some questions, so I'll leave you two alone."

"No, please!" Mrs. Iver clutched at Stephanie with long brown fingers. "Stay, please!"

"Of course I'll stay if you want me to. I'll sit over there so I won't disturb you." She sat in the chair farthest away.

Brichter sat down beside Mrs. Iver, notebook in one hand.

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"Mrs. Iver, do you know of anyone who might have a reason to harm your husband? Perhaps someone who had a serious quarrel with him recently?"

She frowned and shook her head. "Everyone liked Rob." Her voice was sweet and breathy.

"I don't know how to tell you this other than plainly: It appears your husband has been poisoned."

"No!" she said. "It was his heart; he had a heart attack! I went to check on him and I saw he wasn't breathing. And I checked and there was no pulse. I called his doctor, and next thing I knew those terrible men came in and began slapping him and beating on his chest . . . and more came, and they made him throw up . . . " She sobbed once. "Couldn't they see he was dead? It was horrible to watch!"

Brichter made a short note. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Iver. If it's poison, then it's possible your husband has been murdered."

She paled under the tan. "I don't believe you," she whispered harshly. "No, that's impossible. No one hated him. He was too weak to quarrel with anyone, and anyway he didn't have many visitors. He looked so dreadful, with his face all crooked, I couldn't stand the way they'd stare at him."

Brichter was writing. "There are some police detectives on their way down here. Will you talk with them?"

"No. No, I don't think so. I've called my attorney, and he's coming. I won't have Rob cut open, I won't! He was an important man. Please—" She put a strong brown hand on his arm and looked at him, tears like diamonds clustered under her frightened blue eyes. "I'm very tired; I think I'll go home now."

"I'm afraid I have to ask you to stay until we've completed our preliminary investigation."

She blinked at his cool tone without dislodging the tears. He waited for her to ask indignantly if she were under arrest, but she said, "Then perhaps you can leave me alone."

Stephanie said gently, "I don't think you should be left alone just now. I'll get someone to stay with you. Would you like some coffee?"

Mrs. Iver gave Stephanie an unreadable look. "No, thank you," she said.

"Whew," said Stephanie, as she and Brichter went back up the corridor. "Was that all right, getting someone to watch her?"

"Yes," he said, absentmindedly brushing the sleeve Mrs. Iver had touched. "And neatly done, too, not giving her a chance to say no."

"Do you think she did it?"

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"I can't say."

"Yes, you can."

He didn't like discussing his job with civilians. But she was interested, concerned—and he really liked her. "Well, it wasn't suicide. Dr. Anderson said he was angry and fighting, which are not symptoms of depression. And she said herself there were no quarrels, no enemies, not even much by way of visitors." He pulled an ear. "This is less concrete, but you noticed earlier how all her tears were for herself. Same thing now. Not one bit of sympathy for the poor bastard on the receiving end of his friends' pity, only for the poor woman forced to watch it. I'd hate to be at the mercy of someone as egocentric as that."

"Dr. Anderson told me he thinks it's cyanide all right. He said to lean on Mr. Iver while inhaling is to take your life in your hands. I've never been that close to a real murderer before."

He smiled crookedly. "What makes you think that?"

She went into the nurses' lounge ahead of him. "Well, it isn't likely, is it?"

Brichter thought of the kid he'd shot a few months ago when he accidentally interrupted a liquor store robbery. "People kill people all the time. They just don't talk about it to their friends."

"You have a very ugly way of looking at life, you know that?"

"Comes with the uniform, I guess," he said. "Coffee?"

"No, but you can hand me my Diet Pepsi." She sat at the table and looked resentfully at her clipboard.

"Where did she get it, I wonder?" Brichter asked, taking the opened can out of the little refrigerator and handing it to her.

"What, the cyanide? I don't know. We don't have any around; it has no true medicinal purpose, the laetril pushers notwithstanding."

"Yes."

"It's in peach pits, isn't it? Maybe you should search her garbage for peach pits."

"We probably will. And check her passport. Maybe she's been to South America lately, buying lima beans. Lima beans grown in the tropics are full of cyanide."

She smiled, took a drink of her diet soda. "You know the damnedest things."

"I know."

"Obie?" said Suzy, leaning into the room. "We're finished with Mr. Smith."

"Could you hold him a while?"

" 'Fraid not. Don't forget to call me with the results of the B.A." She left without waiting

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for an answer.

Brichter said thoughtfully, "Smith. Registered pharmacists can buy poisons. And Mrs. Iver got her prescriptions filled at his store. Maybe he's ordered some cyanide lately."

"Now *that's* ridiculous!"

"Is it? You said she put the make on him. Maybe he didn't say no."

"There's that ugly imagination again."

"Yes." He pulled out his notebook and consulted a page. "When I told him he'd missed his plane he said, 'She'll kill me.' I thought he was so drunk he'd forgotten he was a widower, but he's acted perfectly sober ever since. Ask anyone." He closed his eyes. "There was just a little break on the end of that when he said it, like he barely stopped himself from adding 'too.' "

"You're serious!"

"Is there some place I can talk to him in private?"

She hesitated, then said. "The head nurse's office. She's gone home, won't be back until tomorrow."

"I'll come and see you before I leave," he said. "Will you be here for a while?"

"No, the elves are going to come and do this work while I'm asleep in my little bed." She picked up her neglected clipboard.

As he walked down the hallway he made a bet. The scare of the accident and the shock of the arrest had scared Smith sober, right? If so, by now the sympathy of the staff should have greatly alleviated the false sobriety.

He pulled back the curtain. Smith turned his head alertly and said, "Can we go now? Do you know if the jail will take traveler's checks?"

Still sober: You lose. "Yes, I think they do. Mr. Smith, may we delay going for a just a few minutes? Something has come up with regard to Mr. Iver, and I'm hoping you can help us clear it up."

Smith rubbed his chin with a finger. "I don't know anything about it."

"Well, it's kind of a pharmaceutical question."

"Oh. Oh, well, all right, if you think I can help."

Brichter began reviewing in his head the techniques of interrogation as he led the little man to the cosy office beyond the nurses' station. He flipped on the lights as they went in, and shut the door.

He put a chair at the side of the desk so he could observe Smith's entire body during the interrogation. "Sit here, please." Smith sat in a single contained motion in the chair and grasped his knees with his hands to stop

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their trembling.

Brichter went behind the desk, took out his long fat notebook, and sat down. "I'll try to keep this short," he said. "It appears Mr. Iver was poisoned with cyanide."

"The nurse at the desk said cardiac arrest," said Smith instantly.

"Yes, cyanide induces cardiac arrest. I'm hoping you'll agree to help us determine how he might have gotten hold of the poison. You can refuse to talk to me, if you like; that's your right. And you have a right to discuss this with an attorney before we go on, and to have an attorney present while we talk. If you want one, but can't afford one, I'll get one assigned to you before we continue. Do you understand?"

Despite his gentled-down paraphrase of the standard Miranda warning, Smith looked thoroughly terrified. "Yes."

"Will you answer some questions for me?"

"Yes."

"Cyanide is a deadly poison. It would be difficult for anyone to obtain it, even a registered pharmacist."

"Yes, you have to say why and sign a poison log book."

"Have you ever ordered any, for any reason?"

"No! I mean, no, but my grandfather used to. To fumigate houses with, and kill mice. There are substitutes today, less dangerous. But ag agents —agricultural agents — still sometimes offer it. There are some old farmers around here who use it in the barnyard, to kill vermin."

"I see." Writing, "Did Mrs. Iver ever ask you about cyanide or any other poisons?"

"My God, you think *she* did it?"

"She's our chief suspect," admitted Brichter. "I'm trying to determine if she could have purchased or otherwise acquired it."

"That's crazy! She's a kind woman, a decent person! You can't possibly think she did such a thing!"

"You seem very sure of that."

"I am, I am!"

Brichter turned back a few pages in his notebook. "Then you admit you know her better than you said earlier, when you said she wasn't a friend."

Smith stared at the notebook. "No." He swallowed, and gestured feebly. "You don't have to know her well to know she isn't capable of such a thing."

"Did you attend the February fund-raiser for County General Hospital?"

Smith opened his mouth, closed it, and tried again. "No," he said.

"Mr. Smith, if you are going

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to lie to me, we might just as well discontinue this right now." Brichter put down his pen and waited.

The silence grew and grew. Smith said softly, "She is very beautiful."

"I know. If she'd come on to me like that, I might have been so flattered it wouldn't have occurred to me to say no."

"Yes." Smith sighed, a very gentle sigh, laden with admissions.

Brichter tried a rare bluff. "How long has your affair been going on?"

Smith hesitated, but Brichter had gotten just the right matter-of-fact tone. "Just a few months. We were very careful; I don't know how you found out. Her husband can't—well, he can't. He was very ill, sicker than almost anyone knew. And very unhappy. She said he told her once that if he wasn't going to get better he wanted to die. She was brave, but she needed a respite, you know? It just sort of grew."

"You discussed marriage?"

Smith wriggled uncomfortably. "No." Brichter put down his pen and Smith said, "Well—yes."

"Did she consider divorcing him?"

"Yes, but that would seem like she was deserting him. Better or worse, and all that. And anyway—" He paused, glanced at Brichter. "Anyway, she wouldn't have gotten any money, she said. I'd do anything for her, but I'm not a wealthy man, and she's used to nice things."

"I see," Brichter said. "The real reason you said you were going to get sick was so you wouldn't have to see her, right?"

"Yes. I was scared—she thinks I'm in Chicago by now."

"Yes, sir."

"I love her, you know."

"Yes, I believe that you do."

Smith gingerly tried out the idea: "If you think I got it for her, they'll put me in prison for the rest of my life."

Careful, thought Brichter. "No, sir, I doubt that. She's a beautiful young woman and she'll hire the best defense money can buy. I doubt if she'll spend a long time behind bars. And any accessory could hardly be given a longer sentence, could he? It wouldn't be fair."

Smith looked at the baby palm on the head nurse's desk and said sadly, "I really want to go to Nassau. Everyone expects me to go."

"And you probably will. You've got a lot of friends in Charter."

"The whole town will hate me if they think I helped her kill him."

"Well, but what if they think

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you let her face it alone?"

Smith bowed his head. "Is she under arrest?"

"There are detectives on their way now."

"She's a remarkable woman. And he was really suffering. It was a mercy—" He stopped, boggling, and went abruptly off on a tangent. "Y'know, I must've drunk a gallon of Gary's fish-house punch at my party, but I didn't feel a thing. Then I got in my car and pow! All of a sudden I'm singing."

"Yes, sir."

"Then I saw your red lights, like to scared me to death. And when you pulled me out of the car, I could see it in your eyes. I thought, Oh, God, she messed it up somehow and I'm screwed. I was right, huh?"

Don't lie. "No, sir, it was an ordinary DWI, driving while intoxicated—and fleeing the police."

"Shouldna run, should I?"

"That's right."

"All those people out there, sayin' how sorry they are for me—dammit, what the hell do they know?" There was a long silence which Brichter refused to break. Smith sighed. "Wouldna liked it anyhow," he said. "Every time I heard an American voice, I'd've jumped ten feet, prob'ly."

"Yes, sir."

"So I'm not mad at you for arrestin' me. Jus' as well, prob'ly."

"Yes, sir." Here it comes; he's ready now.

Smith shrugged unevenly and his tongue thickened. "I signed my name with my lef' hand, and burned all my copies of the tran-zaction."

"Where did you order it from?" Brichter was careful not to change the tone of his voice, to make the confession just a natural continuation of the interrogation.

"Drug house in Cincinnati. Tol' them we had a yard boy who used it to kill gophers."

"Was it prussic acid?"

"Huh-uh, p'tassium cyanide pellets." His terror gone, Smith was relapsing into drunkenness. "I groun' a few of 'em up and put the powder into some capsules I'd emptied his antibiotics out of." He frowned heavily. "She made me do four, though I told her one would do it and two were ample." He studied the baby palm in its yellow pot. "She was goin' to fly to Nassau after the funeral and we'd meet as if by accident. We'd take it slow, not marry for a year or so."

"Yes, sir. What did you do with the leftover cyanide?"

"Put it in a cookie tin and buried it under hydro-dydrangeo bush inna back yard. The flowers'll be a nice cyanotic

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blue this summer. Only isn't cyanide, o' course. The metal does it."

Dig under the hydrangea bush, wrote Brichter. "Who's idea was it to use cyanide?"

"Mine. She wanted somethin' fast an' sure an' hard to rekanize. I went all through my PDR lookin' an' lookin' and cou'dn't fin' nuthin' as good—"

There was a soft knock and the door opened. Suzy stuck her head around. "Obie, those detectives are looking for you. Hi, Mr. Smith!"

"H'lo, Suzy!" he said, waving cheerily.

"Wow, you are drunk after all! That's all right, celebrate! Life for you is going to be one sweet dream, right?"

"Well, first this p'liceman is taking me to jail."

She groaned, "Obie, do you *have* to?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You *are* a merciless bastard, aren't you?"

"Yes, ma'am. Send the detectives along."

The door slammed. Smith said humbly, "Thanks for not telling her."

"That's all right." There was, after all, mercy and mercy. "May I offer you a little advice?"

"Sure."

"Don't eat anything Mrs. Iver might send or have sent to you. And if you make bail, don't accept any dinner invitations from her."

Smith gave this ponderous consideration. "Y'know, I tol' her two was plenny, but she wanted four."

"Yes, sir."

"Women, huh?"

"Yes, sir."

"I sure can pick 'em."

"Yes, sir." Brichter turned back the leaves of his notebook in a review and they sat in companionable silence, waiting for the boys from Homicide.

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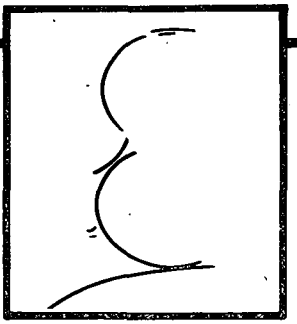
Sean Connery as James Bond captivates Kim Bassinger in *Never Say Never Again.*

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MURDER BY DIRECTION

by Peter Shaw



Returning for the seventh and perhaps the last time as James Bond, Sean Connery turns in his best performance to date in the role. He has aged in the twenty years since *Dr. No,* and the makers of the new **Never Say Never Again** have been wise to recognize the fact. Indeed, they have imparted a special charm to the movie by concentrating on Bond's problems with age.

"M," the new secret service boss, who believes that Bond is over the hill, sends him off to a health spa. Here Bond is informed that all the vodka martinis he has drunk over the years have let loose "too many free radicals" in his bloodstream. One therapist remarks that "your body's got enough scar tissue for an entire regiment." Bond is not entirely impressed. He smuggles in a supply of liquor and pate, using the attache case that usually contains his special gadgets.

Eventually he has to deal with the latest threat from SPECTRE, the good old sinister organization presided over by Swedish actor Max Von Sydow. These days the threat to blow up an atomic bomb is the very least challenge we can expect a secret agent to face. In *Never Say Never Again,* therefore, *two* atomic bombs are at issue. They are ingeniously stolen during an American cruise missile test, hidden at opposite corners of the world, and set to go off in a week. The ransom demand is another plot element that has undergone inflation. Like the old sixty-four dollar question on radio that went to sixty-four thousand and then to one hundred twenty-eight thousand dollars, the traditional

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million dollar ransom has here grown to twenty-five billion.

Dealing with the atomic challenge is, as always, merely routine, which is not to say that the action isn't fun to watch. The villainess and heroine are both as beautiful as—perhaps a touch *more* beautiful than—those who have preceded them. The assignment requires spending time in the Bahamas (Nassau), the south of France (Nice, Monte Carlo, Antibes, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat), and North Africa (actually filmed in France also). Connery gets to visit a gambling casino, ride a motorcycle, ascend into the air in a one-man, vertical-take-off rocket device, and finally to rescue the heroine on horseback. There are also three underwater scuba diving scenes—one too many.

Sean Connery, allowed to play an undisguisedly older man, is less cocksure and therefore more attractive than in the past. He is a bit like Alexandre Dumas' dashing swordsman, D'Artagnan, as he appears in *Twenty Years After*, the sequel to *The Three Musketeers*. To be sure, the middle-aged D'Artagnan is said to be exactly forty, whereas Connery is some years past that. Thus the present Bond is more properly comparable to Simenon's aging Inspector Maigret, whose character deepened with the years, or to John le Carré's George Smiley and Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, both of whom proved to be notably absorbing figures when they came out of retirement to take on one more case.

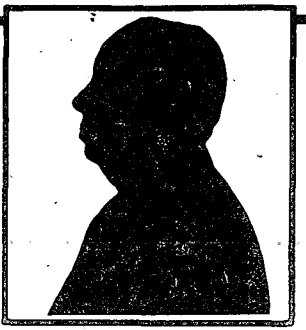
Never Say Never Again not only keeps up with the technical tradition of Bond movies with its settings, its paraphernalia, and its action scenes, but is also carried along by superior acting, from Connery on down. Max Von Sydow, by now an experienced Hollywood villain, had a distinguished career in movies directed by Ingmar Bergman. His SPECTRE employees all have wonderful foreign accents: the wealthy, psychotic director of the bomb operation is played by the Viennese stage actor, Klaus Maria Brandauer, and his female factotum is the darkly delicious, Nicaraguan born Barbara Carrera.

The British supporting actors are best described as "top drawer." For example Alec McCowen does a delightful turn as the old armorer who supplies Bond with the latest gadgets. "Now you're in this," McCowen tells him, "I hope we're going to have some gratuitous sex and violence" (luckily we don't). The rest of the script is witty in the same broad but engaging manner.

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FRAMES OF REFERENCE

by Peter Christian



While **horseracing** may be dubbed the sport of kings, enough crime lurks at the track to attract less honest citizens. And attract movie-makers as well. Racing crimes have turned up in mystery films at a gallop.

Perhaps the most enduring horserace caper story is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Silver Blaze" in which a champion horse is kidnapped—not so unlikely as to be imitated in recent real-life headlines. Sherlock Holmes later uncovers the thoroughbred, his coat painted a different color, entered as an unknown in an important race. The plot was used in a 1937 British film with the distinguished Arthur Wontner as Holmes, but when it was released in this country, the original Doyle title was dropped for the snappier but less appropriate *Murder at the Baskervilles*. Even snappier still, the movie added Professor Moriarty picking off one of the competing horses on the track with an airgun. A more faithful version of *The Silver Blaze* was filmed in England recently with Christopher Plummer playing Holmes; it has few frills and a fine sense of period, especially the Victorian racetrack.

Other of our more celebrated cinema detectives have also visited the track. In *Charlie Chan at the Racetrack* (1936), the Oriental sleuth responds to an urgent cable from a track owner to find him dead—and he later does some Silver Blaze-like switching himself. *Shadow of the Thin Man* (1941) finds Nick Charles at the races, a favorite diversion, coping with the murder of a jockey. William Powell and Jean Arthur starred in a Nick-and-Nora imitation

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called *The Ex-Mrs. Bradford* (1936) which also deals with a jockey's murder. At the climax Powell gathers the suspects together to watch a film of the race—and saddles a killer.

Crooked jockeys, tempted by gamblers' payoffs, turn up in herds in mystery films. Sometimes they turn up dead, not infrequently felled by such lurid methods as hypodermic injections and hidden poisons. At other times, however, the inherent nobility of anyone who loves animals redeems them, and at the last moment they decide against "throwing" the race—as Stanley Clements does in the 1945 Alan Ladd melodrama *Salty O'Rourke*, and Johnny Stewart in *Boots Malone* (1952) starring William Holden. The ever-youthful Frankie Darro, Jr., devoted an entire career to playing jockeys of every silken stripe, sometimes heroic, sometimes tainted, sometimes murdered—either discovered dead in the back of the stable or toppling off the horse in the middle of a race.

The enormous amount of money a racetrack draws has been the basis of several crime films. In Stanley Kubrick's second directorial effort, *The Killing* (1956), an ex-convict (Sterling Hayden) and some friends plot to rob a track of its receipts; a horse is later killed, and chance circumstances bring them to grief. A similar scheme takes place in the fine Robert Duval film, Richard Stark's *The Outfit* (1974). And a beheaded racehorse shocked audiences in *The Godfather* (1972).

One of the central plot turns of the celebrated scam film *The Sting* (1973) is "past posting"—delaying news of the results of a racing event so that someone can place a bet on a horse he privately knows has already won. This was easy enough to do in *The Sting's* period gambling den, with its primitive wire lines to distant tracks, but past-posting has turned up in a surprising number of other places. No doubt demonstrating the sinewy endurance of gambling crime dramas, the most recent instance was an episode of *Remington Steele* this year—updated so that the sporting event results were delayed by interference with a dish satellite antenna!

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UNSOLVED
by George J. Summers

Unsolved at present, that is, but can you work it out?

The answer will appear in the March issue.

Albert, Barney, and Curtis were questioned about the murder of Dwight. Evidence at the scene of the crime indicated a lawyer might have been implicated in Dwight's murder.

Each suspect, one of whom was the murderer, made two statements as follows:

ALBERT:
1. I am not a lawyer.
2. I did not kill Dwight.

BARNEY:
3. I am a lawyer.
4. But I did not kill Dwight.

CURTIS:
5. I am not a lawyer.
6. A lawyer killed Dwight.

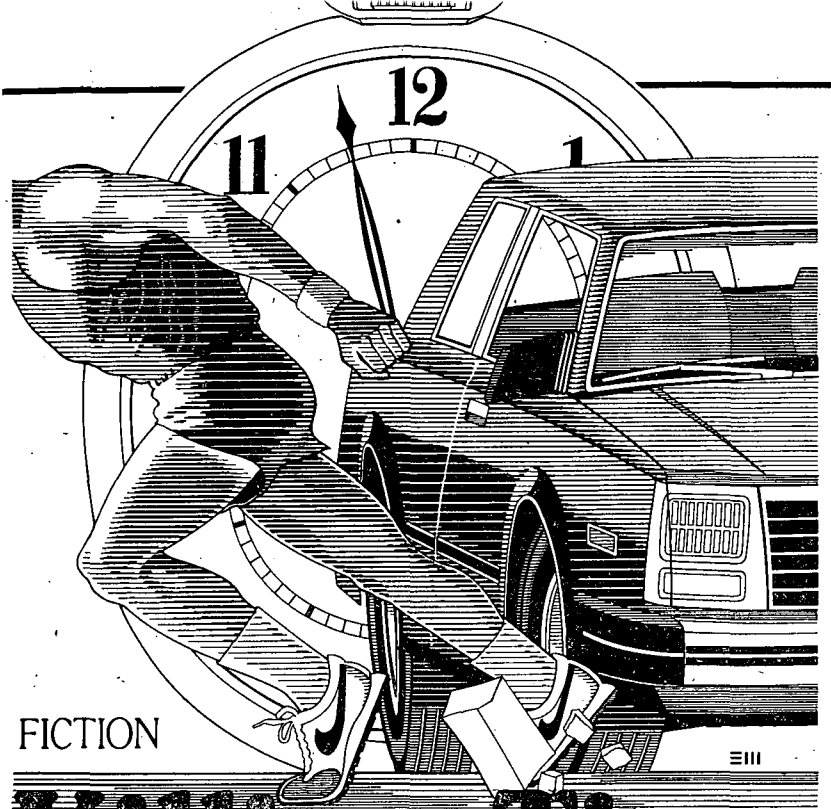
The police subsequently discovered that:
I. Only two of the above statements were true.
II. Only one of the three suspects was not a lawyer.

Who killed Dwight?

See page 133 for the solution to the January puzzle.

"Lawyer's Testimony," taken from Test Your Logic *by George J. Summers. Copyright © 1972 by George J. Summers. Dover Publications, Inc., N.Y., N.Y.*

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FICTION

Killing Time

by T. Robin Kantner

"Dad's dying," Marsha Winchester greeted her brother.

"Far as I'm concerned, he died ten years ago," Jim answered, dropping himself indolently into a threadbare stuffed chair.

I sighed and wished I could disappear.

Marsha Winchester stood ramrod straight by Jim's apartment door and folded her hands together behind her back. She was a tall, strong woman in her mid-thirties, with a round, sunny face, perfect teeth, innocent yet self-assured blue eyes, and short-clipped black hair. Her sky-blue naval uniform skirt and jacket were

Illustration by Eric Marcus

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freshly pressed; gold trinkets, probably denoting rank, twinkled on her white blouse collar. "You can reach him at home. He refuses to go to the hospital; he's got private-duty nurses tending to him at home full time."

"No dice," Jim fired back sullenly, not looking at her, not welcoming her. "It's been too long. I cut him off from my life, he cut me off from his money. Not that I give a damn about his money."

Sure you don't, I thought, trying to stare into the middle ground between brother and sister. I hadn't come here for this.

Marsha Winchester said judgmentally, "I thought you might feel differently after all these years. Should have known better."

I made an unsolicited attempt to ease the tension. "Too bad about your dad. There's been nothing about it in the papers." If I had any journalistic inclinations at all, here was my big chance. Big Jim Winchester, founding chairman of X-Cell Communications, is packing it in. The line from the current hit "Lucky Man" occurred to me: "No money could save him. . . . "

Marsha Winchester turned to me with her mouth set. "This is a private matter, mister."

"Well, excuse me all to hell." I got to my feet, fully intending to leave and to hell with young Jim. Somebody was trying to kill him, he'd told me, and being nosy, he wanted to find out who. That was all. "Tell you what," I said to him, "you call me when you're ready to—"

Winchester rose, too. He was taller than me, a long, smooth, tanned, heavily muscled man just on the brink of thirty, wearing a purple tank top and red running shorts. He moved with the unselfconscious grace of the perfectly tuned athlete. "No," he insisted, giving me a placating look. "Marsha's the intruder. I didn't invite her here." He turned to her. "Nothing personal, sis, but forget it. No deathbed reconciliations. Now, if you've done your sibling duty, I'd appreciate it if—"

"Of course," she smiled brightly at both of us. She was a gorgeous woman, the unstylish navy uniform notwithstanding. By way of farewell, she said, "Gentlemen," opened the door, and left.

Winchester faced me, looking tense. He had a tan horse face and longish, shaggy blonde hair. Unlike his sister, his eyes were gray, piercing, and indolent. When he smiled, which he wasn't right now, it was rakish and knowing. The money had been a long time ago, but despite his junky Ypsilanti apartment, he'd come from money,

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and it still showed.

I asked, "What's with the uniform?"

Winchester barefooted over to the apartment door and closed it. "She just finished navy active duty last year, Far East and 'Nam. She's staying in the reserve, I guess. Hell, I don't know, I hardly ever see her. Or any of them."

I clapped my hands together sharply and said brightly, "Okay! Where were we? Oh, yes. Somebody's trying to kill you and you want my help."

Winchester said, "Hang on a second." He disappeared into the dim kitchen off to our left and came back with a section of bent, twisted flexpipe in his hands and tossed it to me. "Know what that is?" he asked, picking up a pair of heavy handsized dumbbells and holding them straight out in front of him like it was the most natural thing in the world.

Officially, anyhow, I'm an apartment maintenance guy, and I sure as hell knew what it was. "Gas lead for a stove," I said, examining the copper fittings.

"Right," he said, his voice tense from the strain of holding the weights. "Look at it closer."

There was a bad pinch in the pipe and a small crack showed in the copper ripples. "Looks like you bent it one time too many, Jimmy," I said.

"I didn't," he gasped, and slowly lowered the dumbbells to the floor. He slouched back in his stuffed chair, crossed one ankle over the other knee, and said quietly, "I came home early one morning and found the place full of gas. I shut off the main valve and opened the windows to air it out."

"Stupid, stupid, stupid. A spark, an electric motor, a pilot light, and you'd of gone rye crisp, pal."

He ignored me. "Somebody *did* that, Perkins. Snuck in, blew out the pilot lights, and started the leak. If I'd been sleeping in the apartment at the time, I'd have died."

I looked at the pipe again and then let it jangle to the floor. "What did the cops say?"

Winchester linked his hands behind his head, elbows out like wings. "They gave me five minutes and sent me away. Figured I was just another goofy college kid. Then I damned near got run over. Right out there on the street. Just before dawn one morning last week. Car came up from Huron with no lights on, going like a bat out of hell. Good thing I'm in shape, I dived behind a tree. The car smacked the curb. I felt its wind, it was going that fast and came that close. Then it charged up to Washington and disappeared."

"Plate number?"

"I was too busy jumping. It

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was pitch black out. No street lights."

I glanced down at the pipe, toying with the thing in my mind. "Maybe some drunk," I suggested, testing his conviction as much as anything else.

Winchester's face went empty, unswayed. "No." He swallowed. "I keep waiting for him to try again. I've been lucky so far, my luck's bound to run out. That's why I called you. Can you help me?"

This deal was a little off my beaten path. Most of my jobs then—this was more than ten years ago—tended to be runaways, divorce research, corporate background investigations, bill collection, and the like. And, judging from the crummy apartment and the ninth-hand furnishings, it didn't look like Winchester had money just lying around with my name on it. But what the hell. I said, "Two hundred a day plus expenses."

"I'll raise it somehow. It's tight, but I'll manage it." I couldn't work up a lot of sympathy for a guy who'd walked away from big Winchester bucks that had been his for the asking. Winchester, sensing agreement, straightened in his chair, set both feet on the floor, and bent toward me with elbows on his knees. "What do you think?"

"What?" I retorted sharply; "you figure me for some kind of psychic? I don't *think* anything. I plug along, check things out, put 'em together, see how it falls. It takes time, and information." I reached down into my boot and took out a short cork-tipped cigar. After lighting it with a big wooden kitchen match, I exhaled smoke and asked, "Any idea of the dates of these, um, attacks?"

"Sure." He got up and went to the rickety table by the window. After digging through his books, he gave me two dates, without qualification: May 20th and June 2nd. "I keep a detailed journal," he explained, leaning against the table, which gave a warning groan.

" 'Kay. Now: who'd have reason to kill you, Jim?"

"I've thought about it," he said defensively. "Hell, I'm nobody, Ben."

That's what they all say. My opinion is, for every person in the world, there's at least two who'd like to see him dead. I figured I'd have to do this the hard way. "Where do you work?"

"I'm managing editor of the school paper," he said with no small pride.

"I mean *work*."

He stared at me sullenly. "Well, I'm a bartender part time over at the Alibi."

"I could spend a month on the possible suspects in *that* joint."

Winchester pulled away from the table, which shrieked in re-

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lief, and came over and dropped heavily into his big chair across from me. He said thoughtfully, "There's one guy there. Billy Bennett. He tended bar there, too. I caught him till-tapping and reported it. He got fired."

I drew on my cigar and said thoughtfully, "Some people don't take kindly to that. Okay, Billy Bennett. Anybody else?"

I guess they don't teach courses in lying at Winchester's school, and if they did, Winchester had flunked them. Because he'd definitely thought of somebody, but he said casually, "I don't know . . . I don't think so, Ben."

I prodded, "Well, you're in school, right?"

"Yeah," he said with some impatience, "but that's . . . there's nothing in that, is there?"

"Look, you be the client and I'll be the investigator, all right?"

He held up both massive hands, nodding. "Okay, okay."

"Okay. Got anything to drink in this place?" I was getting thirstier by the minute. The sun beat down on the tile roof of the old house and turned Winchester's second floor apartment into an oven.

"Got some apple juice and milk. Two percent."

"I said *drink*. Like maybe a beer."

"Uh . . . let me see." He went into the kitchen. I looked around the room and my eyes fell on the rickety table by the window, stacked with papers and books, mostly about plants and such. Winchester brought me a cold can of Stroh's. It was stained and looked like it had been in the refrigerator, or a dumpster, for a long time, but who's complaining? I popped the top and took a swig. Jim said apologetically. "Somebody left it here a few months ago."

Cold and wet, anyhow. I gestured at the books. "Biology, huh? When do you graduate?"

"Botany," he corrected, slumping back into his chair. "I don't know, I keep changing majors. Drives my advisers nuts. Started out in finance, went into business administration, now I'm in botany. Maybe I'll go into forestry."

"You're what, pushing thirty? How long you been in school?"

"Twenty-eight. Ten years," he replied sullenly.

"Don't know how good you're doing studying weeds and that, but you've sure got a lot of experience at going to college."

Unoffended, he said, "Just don't know what I want to do. Until I figure it out I'm killing time."

"Ain't life a stitch?" I grinned. "Now come on, give over a couple more names."

He stared right through me, his expression now impossible to read. He seemed to have

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made up his mind. "A lady. Mrs. Flerlage, Peggy Flerlage."

"Mrs.?" I asked, unsurprised. Every guy I know messes with married action one time or another, myself included. "What's the story?"

"She was one of my escort clients. But she—"

"Escort? What the hell you talking about?"

He got up, nervous and animated now, and went back into the kitchen. From behind the open Frigidaire door he said, "I escort women. Socially. They pay me."

"You mean, you get paid to—"

He slammed the elderly fridge door and stood framed in the kitchen doorway, his hand wrapped most of the way around a quart can of apple juice. "They pay me to take them out. And that's all. It's purely innocent."

I drank some beer, stifled a burp, and asked, "So how many women you do this for? Or with? Or to?"

He lowered the can, swallowed, strolled back into the room. "Five right now, off and on. It's a word of mouth thing. They're married and their husbands travel and they're alone most of the time. We go out, have dinner, dance sometimes, go to concerts. I look good in suits. I dance well. They, uh . . . they like my looks. They're lonely and bored. I get free meals, and diversion, and get paid on top of it."

I thought, what a nifty line of work. "So what's the deal on Flerlage?"

He sat down, sloshing the juice can. "You've heard of Professor Flerlage."

"Never have, nope."

He was skeptical, but he said, "Big wheel over at the U. Peggy's his wife. I began taking her out about six months ago and it went about as sour as it could."

"Do tell," I prodded, not wanting to put words in his mouth.

He toyed with the can in his big hands, looking down at it. "I started sleeping with her." He looked suddenly up at me and saw my patented blank look. "I never did that with any of the others. That's never part of the deal, you can't even hint at it, even if you want to, even though they do sometimes, the bitchier ones. Only with Peggy, she was . . . she was subtle and a little sly. And damn good looking, for early fifties. It went one step and then another and then all the way."

He seemed more worked up about it than he should have been. I mean, what's the big deal? "So what happened?"

"I finally broke it off. It was supposed to be a business deal. So I called her and said I wouldn't see her any more."

A shaft of ash had grown

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crookedly on my cigar, and I tipped it off into a saucer on the chipped coffee table that crouched between us. "I assume she didn't take kindly to that?"

"She went nuts," he replied, eyes wide. "Began following me around. Came into the Alibi. Left notes under the apartment door. Called me at all hours. Begged, then threatened. Said she'd tell my father I was some kind of male prostitute." He smiled wanly: "As if I'd care what she told him, or what he thought.

"Then one night she met me in the Alibi parking lot after we closed. She jumped me, hitting, screaming, scratching, kicking, biting. It was like having a sackful of hacked-off cats tossed at you."

"Did you hit her back?" I asked, thinking, of course not.

"Of course not. I held her off, pushed her away, and ran like hell. That was about a week before . . ." He gestured with the can at the twisted flexpipe coiled like a snake on the floor at my feet.

It was tough, but I didn't give in to the temptation to laugh at the picture of a middle-aged, hot-thighed twist throwing a hurricane of kicks and punches at this brawny young behemoth as he ducked, cringed, and finally ran away into the darkness. Just proves my theory that trying to avoid trouble is pointless. Trouble is hungry and relentless; it'll catch up with you sooner or later.

I took a last hit off my cigar, mashed it out in the saucer, and rose. Winchester did, too, the memory of his brawl with Peggy Flerlage written all over his face, and abruptly hoisted the can and drained it into his mouth. I said, "Well, pal, I'll check out these couple of things and let you know."

Winchester followed me to the door. His hand tightened on the juice can and it began to crumple as if it were made of tinfoil. He didn't seem to notice. "Look, you probably think I'm hysterical or something."

"Nah," I assured him. "These things you got to check out. Just keep a low profile till you hear, hear?"

"Yeah," he grunted. "Look, I sure hope I'm wrong about this. But if I'm not . . . find him and stop him."

"Or her," I said gently, and left him there.

If I had any reservations about the assignment—and by the time I got to the street I didn't, but not because of anything he'd said—they were dispelled when I checked out the curb on the left side of the street. Near where I'd parked my '71 Mustang, I found a massive curbstone knocked askew, right by a big oak tree. Something had hit the curbstone hard, real

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hard. Hard enough, I thought idly as I walked the rest of the way to my car, to break a tire, maybe.

The Flerlage residence was a massive, square, supremely confident colonial, red brick to the beltline and white aluminum above, at the end of a long wooded lane off Geddes Road between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. The yard roamed on for acres, beautifully landscaped with trees and shrubs, and a military line of oaks huddled protectively around the house. It was shady and cool as I parked and got out next to a gold Mercedes 450 convertible. Before going to the front door I strolled around the car, examining the tires.

My knock went unanswered. I tried again and peered inside; nobody there. Then a female voice called behind me, "Well, surprise, sur—oh!"

I turned. The woman was of average height, deeply tanned, well built in her skimpy two-piece blue bathing suit. Her short brown hair was tinted goldish and her eyes were big and pale blue over a good nose, mouth, and chin. Like the Rolling Stones, time was on Peggy Flerlage's side. Her hands said early fifties but the rest of her lent her back ten years at low interest rates. She had a towel under one arm and a slick clear rocks glass of something in the other. She surprised me by making a bright smile.

"Well, hi there," she said lightly.

"Mrs. Flerlage?"

"I'm Peggy. You're?"

"Perkins. Can we talk somewhere?"

"I'd be delighted, but not here on the stoop. Let's go around back." Without waiting for agreement she turned and walked. I followed her tanned back and firm, well-preserved blue rump around the house. At the back the lawn spread out into a meadow with a wood-fenced area in the middle. Through an open gate I saw a big blue in-ground pool. We went there and she directed me to a white cane chair next to a glass-topped deck table. She took the other chair, set her glass down, and reached back into a big red Coleman cooler which sat on the cement. From the tinkling slushy ice she withdrew a bottle of Smirnoff 100. "Join me?" she asked innocently, holding up the bottle.

She doubtless wouldn't care to hear my theory that vodka is for getting seriously, wall-smashing drunk, and not for noontime sipping around the pool. "Thanks, I'll pass," I answered, and instantly wanted to kick myself for the double entendre.

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Which she caught. Oh, this was a hot one, all right. She smiled, refilled her rocks glass, and slid the bottle back into the slushy ice; then she took a deep swallow of liquor and leaned back in the chair, turning her well-oiled face, eyes shut, full into the sun. "So. Mr. Perkins, your name is. What can I do for you today?"

I refused to count the ways. "You can tell me where you got your tire fixed," I said, getting out a cigar and lighting it from a kitchen match struck on the cement.

Her face didn't change expression but her eyes opened ever so slightly, toward me. "My tire?"

"Yeah, on the 450," I said conversationally, waving the match out. "When you hit a curbstone at that kind of speed, it tends to break the tire. Did it mess up the steering gear, too?"

She straightened and fully faced me. The glass was dead steady in her hand. Lots of practice, I thought. "What in the world are you babbling about?" she asked politely.

"Come on!" I said with sudden harshness. She flinched and her eyes narrowed. "You smashed the tire on a curbstone trying to run Jim Winchester over on the night of June 2nd. You had the tire replaced. Your left front has just barely touched the ground, lady."

"You know Jim?" she asked softly.

"What about the tire, Mrs. Flerlage?" I asked, pushing hard, maybe too hard.

Her face narrowed behind an angry retort, then calmed. She took a sip of the chilled vodka, set the glass down on the cement, reached behind her chair, and picked up a pack of Eve cigarettes. Shaking one out, she put it in her mouth and leaned forward to accept the lighted kitchen match. After a few short puffs, she inhaled a big one and asked in a neutral voice, "Someone trying to kill Jim?"

She was good, but I sensed an air of suppressed playfulness in her. She'd gotten around me and won a point. I replied, "Looks like it. Twice. I'm checking it out. You're pretty high on the list, Mrs. Flerlage."

She worked the cigarette, puffing several times rapidly, burning it down. She looked at me. Damned attractive woman. "I wouldn't dream of doing that," she said finally.

"Let's just say I'm skeptical, after the way you worked him over behind the Alibi."

Her face went loose, much older for just an instant. She snapped the lighted cigarette over the fence behind her, picked up her drink, and said, "The poor kid must have told you everything."

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"I'm a real good listener," I suggested.

"I was very angry with him," she said, settling down in her chair and crossing one elegant, oiled leg over the other. "He's a nice boy. I enjoyed him. I needed him. My husband and I are . . . compatible. We understand each other. I know about his young chippies on teaching fellowships, he knows about my friends. I very, very seldom get dumped, Mr. Perkins. I reacted very badly, I admit it. But I truly hope I didn't hurt him. I certainly wouldn't hurt him, or kill him. Check the trunk of the Mercedes if you don't believe me. It's unlocked." She made a contented smile. "Jim and I are history, and that's all."

"That's all?" I prodded.

She turned and fixed me with her big, clear eyes. "That's all," she said softly. "I'll make other arrangements. I always do."

It was like a generator had gone on inside her, putting out a vivid, almost irresistible surge of magnetism. "I'm sure you will." I got to my feet, leaving my smoldering cigar on the cement, and walked quickly away from there.

And I did check the trunk of the Mercedes.

There was a tire in there, all right. Flat. Without a break in it. Not so much as a scuff.

I didn't track Billy Bennett down until the next day, but I didn't just lie around in the meantime. I drove out to the Winchester estate near the town of Frederick and, for the second consecutive evening, kept watch on its massive iron gate in the woods. Four hours of dead-country stillness, mosquitoes the size of my fist, thirst, hunger, and silence, but it wasn't nearly as exciting as it sounds. I didn't dare approach anyone on the estate openly to talk to. What I had to do was get someone on the inside to come out and talk without realizing what he, or she, was doing. And, by the time I drove home very very late that Thursday night, I'd decided whom to talk to, and how.

Meanwhile, back at the investigation, I got a line on Billy Bennett and, early Friday morning, tapped on the door of a ramshackle brick ranch house in east Ypsilanti. The inner door opened and a young, dirty-haired woman, dressed in cutoff jeans, half-untied halter top and nothing else, appeared and squinted up at me. The Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil" pounded out the door behind her. She said, "Yeah?"

"Billy Bennett," I said, my eyes drawn to her generous breasts, barely restrained or concealed by the halter top.

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"You a cop?" she asked with almost childlike innocence, scratching her dirty neck.

"No," I said, deciding to leave it at that.

She pushed the screen door open for me, turned, and called dully, "Billy." I followed her in, through a dark, dingy kitchen across cracked Formica flooring. The place was losing the war to mildew, dry rot and neglect; it was hot and stuffy and smelled like pizza and marijuana and sweat. The living room was to the right, and almost pitch black except for a strobe light going in the corner, flashing at odd intervals, making black-light posters leap and shine wickedly on the walls.

My flash recovery is pretty good, but even so it took a full minute for my eyes to adjust to the thick darkness of the room. The Stones screamed on and the heat and stench of the marijuana nearly turned my stomach. There were four young men in the heavily curtained room, all long-haired, half-dressed, and supine; one, half slouched on the floor against a squarish, worn couch, cradled a woman loosely in his arms. She wore shorts but no top at all.

As I stood in the entranceway, my escort said to a long, skinny fellow crumpled in the corner, "Billy. Guy to see you."

He built himself to his feet seemingly in sections and shambled over to me. He was tall, wore jeans with a big peace-sign belt buckle and no shirt, and was rail-thin with a hatchet face and dirty brown hair spilled all around his face and shoulders. He grunted, "Yeah, man."

"Perkins. Word with you?"

"Aw, come on back a little later. It's been a long—"

I grabbed him by the big belt buckle, swung him around and jammed him hard up against the wall. It was no feat; he was feathery light and smelled like he hadn't eaten well or washed or even seen the light of day in weeks. I leaned close to him, ignoring sanitary considerations for the nonce, and said softly, "I spent the better part of two days tracking your worthless butt down. Now we're gonna talk, somewhere private, with halfway decent air to breathe, you follow?"

In the half light his face was more weasel than hatchet. He nodded, resigned; disengaged himself from me; and shambled down the hall toward the back of the house. His associates seemingly took no notice of the proceedings. I followed him across a darkened enclosed porch and out the back door. We went down a set of cracked cement steps and onto the rock-hard ground, covered in places with stiff scrubby grass like tufts of hair on a diseased man's head.

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The bright sunlight slashed at my eyes. I turned on Bennett. His face—definitely weasel—was screwed up against the unaccustomed brightness, his eyes were black pinpoints. His bare chest was corpse-white, thin, hairless, and spotted. I said, "You used to work at the Alibi."

He made a crooked, cavernous yawn, showing dirty but straight teeth, and rubbed the back of his neck. "Yeah, so what."

"Got canned for skimming."

"Listen, Dorfman said no cops, and—"

"I'm no cop," I said impatiently. He stared at me, his mouth sagging, his eyes blurry and unreadable. "You seen Jim Winchester lately?" I asked.

"Ole Straight Arrow?" he asked sarcastically. "Nah, why should I? He's no friend of mine. He snitched; that's how come I got fired."

"Bet you'd like to pay him back for that, huh?"

"Love to, man. I'd of—" He stopped, his mouth hanging open stupidly, and said guardedly, "What happened?"

"There's talk hereabouts you might be trying to kill him."

He gaped, tried to laugh, checked my expression, and swallowed hard. "*Kill* him?" he demanded, truly incredulous. "That's a real *joke*, man."

"You're right, Billy. I came out on a beautiful day like today to a slimehole like this just to try out my next routine for 'Laugh-In' on a pukepot like you." I was getting real, balls-of-my-feet worked up, and had to make a conscious effort to calm down.

Billy Bennett was bristling. "Hey, him getting stiffed wouldn't have bothered me for a second, but I wouldn't kill him, no way." He seemed genuine, yet I sensed he took malevolent pleasure in being questioned about it.

"Yeah?" I asked, the menace in my tone and expression entirely real. "Then where were you on May 20th and June 2nd?"

He laughed, his face lined, ugly, and older. "Hell man, I don't know where I was *yesterday*."

"I'm sure that line's boffo among your tokin' friends, Bennett, but I'm not buying. You better do better, or somebody a lot less friendly than me will come around asking. And—"

"Just one damn minute." He fixed me with a piercing stare. "I don't have to prove anything. It's you that has to prove where I was those dates."

"Pretty good jailhouse lawyer, huh, Billy?" I asked sarcastically.

"Michigan law school, second year," he smiled contemptuously. "I don't know nothing from nothing, Mr. Wiseguy

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Perkins. You think otherwise, why, you just go out and prove it. In the meantime, get the hell off my property. You're disturbing the peace and tranquility of me and my friends."

I shrugged, turned from him, and walked around the side of the house toward my car, the tall weeds grabbing and scratching at my slacks. The visit wasn't a disappointment, not at all.

From there I headed for downtown Detroit, beating gears because I was running late. On the way I stopped and called Bill Scozzafava to make sure he was all set for tonight: where, when, and what. He was; in fact, he was eager to do it. By the time I got to the Brodhead Naval Armory on East Jefferson, the noon sun was out in full, unforgiving force. I parked in the dirt lot along the Detroit River and paced, waiting.

John Anders joined me. He was about my age, a thin, trim man with short black hair, long nose, piercing eyes, and bright white teeth. We'd worked together back in '62, then he'd joined the navy and was now back on the line and serving in the Naval Reserve. He wore crisp whites with rows of colored decorations on his chest and was every inch the buttoned-down sailor. He shook hands with me and guided me toward the river. I said, "Hope I won't get you in trouble in there, dragging you out here like this."

"I'm the division yeoman," Anders grinned. "I practically run the place. Besides, the captain's in some meeting somewhere, probably the 19th Hole. What's up?"

We stood on the grassy bank and stared across the blue river. Belle Isle, a green ghost, was down on our right, and the Windsor, Ontario, skyline showed on the other side. I said, "I got a piece of business and need some background. Marsha Winchester. I understand she serves here."

"Lieutenant Winchester," he said respectfully. "Yeah, she drills here; in fact, tomorrow and Sunday are her drill days. Naval intelligence unit."

"Oh yeah? What can you tell me about her?"

"Nice gal. I mean, for an officer. She's in a high-priority intelligence unit. All classified up the poop chute, believe thee me."

"So you don't really know much about her," I concluded.

"I didn't say that," he retorted, miffed, and moved closer to me. "I'm the yeoman, remember? I handle the service records. People tell me things. It's all pretty hush-hush, but—"

"Look," I said, not meaning

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a word of it, "I wouldn't want you to betray confidences, John."

"Well." He squinted toward the sun. "Since it's you, and—you keep your mouth shut, don't you? *Sure* you do." He went on happily with the eagerness of the born gossip. "She did two tours over in the Far East. Naval intelligence in Pearl, then special duty with sink pack."

"Sink pack?" I echoed.

"Commander-in-Chief Pacific. CINCPAC," he explained tolerantly.

"Navy outfit shouldn't have the word 'sink' in its title," I grinned.

"You think *that's* funny. For years and years the commanding officer of the navy was called Commander-in-Chief Ships, abbreviated CINCSHIPS. Some shore jockey wised up after the Pearl Harbor attack and changed the name to Chief of Naval Operations."

"And we're a better country for it, too," I said loyally.

John Anders' eyes narrowed momentarily. He pretty much was a straight arrow; he could kid around about the navy, but he didn't like hearing an outsider do it. He let it go, though. "Anyway, after that, Lieutenant Winchester was interbranch intelligence liaison for line operations at soobick."

"Which is what?" I asked, not daring to guess.

"Subic Bay. Our naval base in the Philippines," he chided. "She even worked out of Long Binh for six months. But that's just a single entry in the service record. I don't know what she did there, and I don't want to know."

I sighed. "Might as well decode that name for me, too, while we're at it."

"Long Binh!" he said, exasperated. "Vietnam!"

"Oh. Sorry."

"Jeez!" He shook his head. "The retention people busted their brains out trying to get her to stay on active duty. Her fitness reports were something else. Lady Spook, her nickname was, but you didn't hear that from me. She rotated out at the end of her enlistment. She's formed her own public relations firm in Ann Arbor. Action Enterprises, it's called. Political stuff. She's in the active reserve now and running this outfit and doing great, I guess. Her company did work for one of the Democratic candidates for governor in '70." He mentioned a name.

"One candidacy that never got off the ground, as I recall." I lighted a cigar. "Know anything about her dad?"

"Hell yeah, who doesn't. X-Cell Communications. But you wouldn't know the lieutenant was loaded. Doesn't talk about it at all. And that kind of stuff

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doesn't turn up in service records."

My puff of blue smoke darted away toward Canada. "Yeah," I said indifferently. "I guess that's about it. Appreciate the help, John."

"Sure, any time, Ben," he grinned. "Did I help you?"

"I don't know yet."

On my drive west out of Detroit, I stopped for gas, and while having the crate filled up I called my lawyer, the ever-cooperative and understanding Mr. Robert Crum, and asked him to dig up whatever poopy he could find on Action Enterprises. He groaned when I said I needed the information as soon as possible, preferably by the next day. But he agreed. He knew he'd send me a bill and, more important, that I'd pay it.

It was Friday evening and TG time at Rushing the Growler. The high-backed wood booths were full already, and most of the tables in the central eating area were occupied, too. I took up my vantage point at the crowded bar and ordered a beer, keeping my eyes casually on the nurse.

As I'd done the previous two nights, I'd parked among high weeds on the deep shoulder of the U. S. 127 highway that ran past the gate of the Winchester estate. The heavy-waisted, thick-thighed young private duty nurse in her crisp white uniform had driven out an hour or so later in her bright red Camaro, right on schedule, and I followed her to Rushing the Growler, a ramshackle burger-and-beer joint on U. S. 12 near Saline. It helps guys in my line of work when people have predictable habits. Now, I thought, glancing at my watch, for a little street theater.

She ordered a beer from a thin, leggy waitress in cutoff bib overalls, then sipped it, jerkily smoking a cigarette and glancing around casually, not knowing whom she was waiting for.

A few minutes later, an enormous man in jeans, high-topped boots, and a denim jacket lumbered into view from one of the booths. He was a mountain of beef, bone, and muscle, lurching and swaying from a skinful of booze that you could practially hear sloshing around inside him. Headed blurrily toward the door, he caught sight of the nurse and veered over toward her table.

She studiously ignored him as he bent down over her and whispered something. He said a few more things, moving jerkily around her, which got no reaction; then he clumsily grabbed a chair and sat down next to her. She turned on him and her eyes looked fiery as she

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hissed something to him. He winced, slack-jawed, and yelled, "Now, you ain't got no call to say that, baby girl!"

She said loudly, "Just get away from me!"

I slid off my stool and was there in three paces. Taking the hardcase's arm, I said, "I think you oughta take off, buddy."

He rose, his fist went back, and the roundhouse right roared toward me like an express train. Had it connected, it would have taken off my jaw, but fortunately things went as planned. I had one foot hooked around a leg on her table, and as the fist whipped past, barely grazing my chin, I flung myself backward, pulling her table, beer, ashtray, cigarettes, and stray chairs down in a convincing crash as I hit the floor. My momentum was such that I slid a good three feet amid the peanut shells, butts, sawdust and beer spills, right into another table, clean knocking the wind out of myself. All hell broke loose elsewhere as three or four bouncers closed in on the weaving, panting, roaring, cold sober Bill Scozzafava and gave him the armlocked bum's rush out of there.

The nurse bent over me. I didn't have to pretend; I was gasping for air and looked pretty sorry just then. I saw that she wasn't pretty at all. Her face was creased and heavy, her eyebrows black and masculine, her hair wispy and not clean, and she looked a bit older than she had at a distance. Concerned, she asked, "You okay, mister?"

I slowly pulled myself to a sitting position, then got to my feet. The nurse rose, too, while the bouncers restored the tables and chairs and the patrons' attention went elsewhere again.

I said to her, "Yeah, I'm okay. You?"

"I'm all right," she said hurriedly, a definite New York accent jabbing through. "I gotta thank you. Normally I get no problems like that, but—"

"It happens," I said airily, brushing sawdust and crud off my pants.

"Listen," she said, giving me an intent look, "can I buy you a beer or something? To thank you?"

She smiled, looking me up and down casually.

"You twisted my arm." We sat down at the table and I signaled the waitress. Getting a cigar out of my boot, I lighted it, puffed, and said, "I'm Ben."

"Cindy. You come in here often?"

"Now and then." Our beers came. We chunked the heavy mugs together and drank. Her heavy, young-old face was relaxed and smiling. I asked, "Where do you work, Cindy?"

I stumbled out of her two-

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bedroom matchbox-sized house on the outskirts of Saline into the cool, misty, false dawn light and walked to the Mustang parked behind the red Camaro in the cracked, one-lane driveway.

After a diligent search, I found my keys, unlocked the door, and slumped into the bucket seat. I fired the engine up, then rested and let it rumble, waiting for heat so I could blow the condensation off the windshield.

My mouth was brittle and dry. My head hummed from lack of sleep and too much booze. My thoughts were free-form and centered on the essential business of breathing. That is, until I put the car into gear and started to back out.

I hit the brake and put the car in neutral. The will. The codicil, that's right. It had come after a lot of drinking and carousing, after we got to Cindy's house; much later, but it had come, finally. She'd been there, and heard it.

I slammed the gearshift back into reverse, backed out quickly, and punched the gas. There was little traffic on U. S. 12 at that hour as I cruised through Saline and barrelled the rest of the way to Ypsilanti. Woodward Avenue was quiet; Jim's apartment windows were dark. I parked at the curb and took up watch.

Jim Winchester opened the apartment door and let me in. He wore an Eastern Michigan athletic T-shirt and cutoff jeans and hadn't shaved or showered this morning. Having never gone home at all that night, I was no sight of sartorial splendor myself. Jim said, "Jesus, it's early! What's up?"

I hadn't figured out how to tell him yet. "Not sure," I grumbled, walking past him into the apartment. Jim swung the door shut. I asked, "You got anything to drink around here?"

"Well, I think there's some beer left—"

"I said *drink*. Like maybe milk or juice."

"Well, how'm I supposed to know?" he complained. "Anyway, all I got is water. I tried to go out last night for groceries, but my car's on the fritz. Totally dead, won't even turn over. Freakin' wreck."

"Want me to take a look at it?"

"Don't bother. Marsha called for a chat last night and when I told her about the car, she agreed to stop by here this morning to leave her car for me. She's got reserve duty downtown this weekend and some other navy type is meeting her here to drive her down."

How convenient and generous, I thought sourly. I went to Jim's phone, picked it up, and

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dialed. Tough luck if Mr. Crum was still asleep. When his blurry, sleep-fogged voice came on, I asked tersely, "What's the story?"

Jim leaned against the wall, doing some kind of bent-over isometric exercise, and said absently, "Me and Marsha used to not get along, but she's lately got a lot friendlier. Maybe because the old man's about to kick. I don't know."

I asked Crum another question, and as he answered, I heard a car engine outside, and footsteps. Then there was a tapping at Jim's door. He strode over and opened it. Marsha Winchester stood there, tall and impressive in her light blue navy uniform and cap. I thanked Crum and hung up as Marsha smiled brightly at her brother and handed him a key. "Here you go, kid. Enjoy. I'll pick it up from you tonight."

I looked at the siblings, working out how to do it. Then I went over to the window and looked down at the street. A lowslung green Triumph convertible sat there with a young man in navy officer whites at the wheel. Behind me, Jim said to his sister, "Thanks. Hope it's no trouble."

I leaned out the open window and hollered, "Hey, sailor! It's okay. Change of plans. You go on ahead, she'll meet you down at Brodhead in time for muster."

Dead silence behind me. I'd have given a fortune to see the stares. The officer squinted up at me, then grinned, tossed me the circle-fingered okay sign, and roared away toward Washington Street.

I turned slowly. The Winchesters stared at me, Jim most of all. Marsha asked stiffly, "Just what the *hell* you think you're doing?"

"Earning my pay."

Jim said, "You crazy? How's she going to get downtown now?"

"She can take her car," I said easily. "Yours is running fine now. I fixed it just after I got here, remember? No problem."

Jim glanced reflexively at his sister and back at me, totally bewildered. To the woman I said, "So go ahead, lieutenant. Take your car, it's okay. I'll just follow you down to make sure you don't open the hood or anything."

She said impatiently to her brother, "Jim—"

"Some reason why you *can't* take your car, lieutenant?" I asked.

She faced me again, mouth set, silent.

Jim whirled to me. "What's this all about, Ben?" he demanded, face stormy.

"Ask your sister. My guess is that she's left some little lethal surprise in that car."

Jim's face flushed and went moist. His hands closed into

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loose fists. He turned very slowly back to his sister. "What about it, Marsha?"

I said, "Tell him, lieutenant. Tell him about your naval intelligence work, about your covert activities. You learned all the tricks, didn't you, Lady Spook?"

Her eyes narrowed. "Listen, mister—"

"Tell him about Action Enterprises, how it's going down the toilet because of mismanagement and because you got stiffed handling that campaign a couple of years ago. You need big money in a hurry, don't you."

Jim found words. "Was it *you*? Were you the one who—"

"Tell him, lieutenant," I said even softer, bracing myself to lunge if she tried to break for it, "about the codicil to your father's will that he executed last month. The codicil that restores Jim's inheritance. Half for him, instead of all for you."

Jim stumbled backward and sat down clumsily in his big rump-sprung chair. He asked me hoarsely, "But what about Flerlage? And Bennett?"

I grinned coldly. "Oh yeah, right, neither one of them is particularly fond of you. People have gotten killed over more trivial things. But in these bits the first thing you look for is the money. If there's money involved, you follow it, no matter how unlikely it seems at first. Your sister's company is a financial disaster. But she figured on your dad's death and the full inheritance to bail her out. When your father changed his will—I don't know why he did that, guilt maybe—she lost a big chunk of it, the cash bequest and income from trusts. I imagine if you predecease your father the whole inheritance goes to Marsha. She's a trained covert intelligence operative. She's made decisions like this before. She knows what to do when it's killing time."

I really have to hand it to her. She showed no emotion, did not change expression, didn't say a word. She just set her purse down on the floor very slowly and leaned back against the wall, hands folded in front of her, staring at us defiantly.

Jim Winchester, pale and trembling, looked up at her. What seemed to be an eternity of silence passed, and then he said bitterly, "You could have had the money if I'd known. All you had to do was ask me. You know I don't want his money. I *never* wanted his money."

I finally believed him.

Her eyes stayed ice but her mouth opened just once and closed. Keeping an eye on her, I moved to the table, picked up the phone, and dialed zero.

Jim Winchester's car had been

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disabled by the oldest, corniest old gag in the world: the copper contact on the rotor had been busted off.

The work on Lieutenant Marsha Winchester's car had been considerably more imaginative. The police lab people found that it had a gimmicked fuel line. A deep cut had been made in it longitudinally, right above the exhaust crossover pipe. Some gas had drained on the gravel lot behind Jim's house, proving that she did it there after arriving and before coming up to give him the keys.

Had Jim driven the car, he'd have gotten perhaps a mile, and by then the crossover pipe would have heated up. Then the dripping gas would have ignited, the fire would have raced along the fuel line to the tank (which she'd considerately filled with gas that morning), and the car would have gone up like a fireball, incinerating Jim and destroying the evidence, including the broken tire in the trunk.

"Big" Jim Winchester died just before Richard Nixon accepted the Republican presidential nomination in August. His son donated most of his inheritance to the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a foundation dedicated to journalistic excellence. The rest of the money—my fee—Jim donated to me.

Marsha Winchester copped a plea to attempted manslaughter and did a year in Ionia Prison. She disappeared after that and, in the years since then, I've never heard another word about her. I think she's changed identities; with her experience and contacts in the intelligence world, it would have been easy.

I don't have to tell you what became of Jim Winchester, not if you keep track of newspaper bylines or listen to National Public Radio. The question isn't whether he'll win a Pulitzer this year, it's whether he'll live long enough to collect it.

I think he will. His sister was the first to discover how hard he is to kill, a lesson learned in the times since then by the gents in Angola, Afghanistan, Iran, Poland, the Falklands, and, now, in El Salvador.

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LADY LUCK AND THE GOLDEN GIRLS

by Lawrence Doorley



Illustration by Kurt Wallace

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It was a combination of fickle blondes and blind chance that drove Associate Professor William Murray over the brink. The tragedy happened in late August, and many of the girls of Colthorpe College, an exclusive girls' school situated on the Main Line west of Philadelphia, didn't hear about the horrible crime until they returned in September for the fall semester. They were dumbfounded. They couldn't believe it. Not kind, decent, handsome, young Professor Murray? It couldn't be. It just couldn't be. But alas, it was true, all too unbelievably true. My God, many of them said, what next?

It probably began in childhood. Freud said that an unhappy childhood will pursue one like a relentless demon for the remainder of one's life. Little Billie Murray's demon was spawned when his parents—his beautiful golden-haired mother and his lazy, happy-go-lucky father—divorced when Billie was six years old. His father vanished forever into the summer twilight ("You be good, slugger, or I'll come back and paddle you.") and his mother rushed back to New York to resume her haphazard acting career ("Don't cry, darling, Mommy'll send for you as soon as she finds a place to live; honestly she will. Now you be a brave little boy and do what Grandpa and Grandma tell you to.").

Poor little brokenhearted Billie went to live with his mother's parents on their Illinois farm. The grandparents were kind to the lonesome little fellow. They fixed up a nice boy's room for Billie under the eaves of the old farmhouse and tried in many other ways to make him forget his sad plight. But that first long winter passed in whimper and sob under heaps of quilts while icy winter winds howled through the bare sycamores outside Billie's window.

His mother phoned at Christmas. She was grief-stricken that she couldn't come to see him. She was trying out for the part of a blonde German nightclub singer for an upcoming Broadway play and was taking singing lessons like mad. She sent him a present, a framed picture of herself smiling coquettishly, and in her short letter to him she said: "Aren't you proud of your pretty mother?"

Spring came, finally, the corn was planted, it rained (never enough), the huge harvest moon waxed and waned, the quilts came out once more, the wind began its age-old threnody, his mother's letters grew fewer, more peevish. She hadn't gotten the German nightclub singer's part, nor any other part. She was having bad luck. New York was thronged with blondes, every one of them aspiring actresses. Her earnings as a cocktail waitress were barely

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enough to keep her alive. But things were bound to change and she and her dear darling would soon be together, this time forever. It never happened.

Freud or no Freud, the moment when Professor Murray began to unravel in earnest occurred in early March when Dean Tobias P. Pelham, the sixty-two-year-old head of the two-man anthropology department at Colthorpe, called Murray to his office and after fifteen or twenty minutes of pedagogic circumlocution came to the point: publish or perish. Have a paper accepted for publication in one of the anthropology journals by September first or Colthorpe would be forced to bring in a new man for the cultural anthropology courses.

"I'm sorry to have to be so blunt, Murray," said Dean Pelham—tall, grey, stately, a fixture at Colthorpe. "But you haven't had a single thing published since your doctoral thesis five years ago; that blonde thing, which was, as I told you at the time, a well conceived paper. But one cannot rest on old withered laurels, can one, Murray?"

Sick at heart, Murray mumbled that, no, one cannot rest on old withered laurels.

That blonde thing—full title, "The Anthropological Blonde"—was published in the prestigious *New England Journal of Anthropology* after Murray's graduation from Columbia University and was instrumental in his being hired at Colthorpe. It had come about when Murray, on an expedition to southern France with a group from Columbia, had been fascinated by an elaborate cave painting depicting Upper Paleolithic animals—bison, ibex, wild boars, mammoths—worshipping at the feet of a female *Homo sapiens,* a creature with exaggerated buttocks and huge breasts and long, wavy tresses flowing from her head. It was easy for Murray to imagine that the female was a blonde, the object of adoration and desire by the prehistoric painter and his tribe. That was the genesis of his thesis, "The Anthropological Blonde," a superbly researched paper that emphasized how blonde females have, through prehistory and in modern times, been held in high esteem. The poet Milton described Eve as being blonde. Venus is always represented as golden-haired. Ancient Greek sculptors, wrote Murray, gilded their statues to show fair-headed goddesses. And such savants as Fierenzula, Luigini, Petrarch, even Aristotle, wrote lyrically of women with golden hair like honey, or the rays of the sun. Pre-Raphaelite artists

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painted their women with flaxen hair.

Blondes were beautiful, alluring, divine, as desirable as gold, as precious as jewels.

"We've talked this over before, Murray," went on Dean Pelham. "I've emphasized the fact that Colthorpe is competing in anthropology with such gargantuan institutions as Harvard, Columbia, Wisconsin, and the larger women's colleges. I've stressed that we must be able to demonstrate to prospective students that we at Colthorpe are on a par with the rest, and frankly, Murray, were it not for the continuing acceptance of my textbooks, anthropology would have long since vanished from Colthorpe's curriculum. As it is, I am in continual conflict with the trustees, who are all for abandoning the department. You, Murray, have not been the asset I hoped you would be."

Dean Pelham had some suggestions. "Find a new, up to date, controversial subject. Cause excitement, try to duplicate your paper on blondes. That demonstrated admirable creativity. It was witty, interesting, entertaining. That's all, Murray. You have a deadline. Have a paper accepted—not published, I'm giving you a break—by September first or . . . well, you know the consequences."

Murray crept home to his apartment on the edge of the campus, gulped two tranquilizers, collapsed into a chair. When, when, when, he moaned, would his bad luck stop? Fate had flung one cruel blow after another for the past fifteen months. First the divorce, Emily leaving him for Florida and a used-yacht salesman with a high school education and a Charlie Chaplin mustache. Her main complaint was that Murray was a stay-at-home, stick-in-the-mud thirty-five-year-old bookworm more interested in hideous old *Australopithecus* and *Paranthropus* female hags than in her own much less antiquated charms. There was a lot of truth to her complaint. Emily, a stunning blonde creature with a cute lisp and gorgeous legs, had appeared during a particularly depressing time when Murray was teaching at a private boys' school while attending Columbia at night. She had overwhelmed him, smothering him with pints of perfume and layers of skimpy lingerie. But her main contribution to the marriage beyond the obvious was to pout and demand to know "where're we goin' tonight?"

After the divorce Murray went to eight pills a day in spite of warnings from his therapist that six were more than sufficient. Another blonde, just like his mother, had toyed with him, deserted him, broken his heart. He contemplated suicide. At night he made

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lists of ways to give up, end it all. The best list contained seventy-eight different ways. He kept that list handy, just in case.

Then, only six months after Emily's departure, word came that his mother had died of cancer in Dallas where she had lived since marrying an oil man three years after going to New York. ("He's a fine man, darling, not like your lazy father. But he's divorced—his wife was a terrible person—and has three children, so it'll be a while before I can get him to send for you. . . . Be patient, darling!") He had seen his beautiful mother only once after she had sent him to live with her parents. She appeared, unannounced, one summer's day when he was eight years old. She had been on her way to Texas to appear in a play with a Dallas theater group. Things were working out at last, she told her darling Billie. Soon they would be together again.

Now that golden creature was dead. Her death devastated him. He hardly ate for days, barely managed to drag himself to class. His students whispered that the more gaunt and woebegone he became, the handsomer they thought him. Finally, with the patient help of his analyst, he stopping gazing for hours at his seventy-eight ways to end his never-ending ordeal.

But not for long. In late February he lost his wallet. He had last seen it in the cafeteria. A frantic search failed to locate it. Why me, why me, why me, he moaned, alone in his apartment. It was bad enough to lose the thirty dollars, but the money was an insignificant loss compared with his social security card, his credit cards, his driver's license, his electronic bank card, all the others. He made no effort to notify anyone; didn't call the bank, didn't write for new cards, just said the hell with it, what was the use. He was obviously misfortune's favorite scapegoat and nothing he could do would change that. He moped through classes. The girls came up with new descriptions: Byronic, sexy, breathtaking, intoxicating. Dean Pelham, stopping Murray on the campus, commented on his recent sluggish behavior and asked Murray if he was constipated. He suggested a liberal dose of milk of magnesia. Murray, blushing to the marrow, thanked the dean.

And now, the last straw, the ultimatum from Pelham: have a paper accepted for publication by September or be out of a job the following semester. The suicide list came out once more. He narrowed the choices to two: an overdose of sleeping tablets or—this seemed the best of all—electrocution by dropping some electrical device—a radio, a toaster, a razor—into the bathtub while bathing.

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Accidental. Poor dear Professor Murray, everyone would say, how sad.

As spring arrived, however, with exuberant birdsong, with violets and dandelions spangling the green grass of the campus, with new hopes, old yearnings, his luck finally changed. A large brown envelope arrived in the mail. It contained his wallet complete with all his cards, minus the thirty dollars. No note, not a word of explanation, just a brand new beginning. "Eureka," shouted Murray under his breath, so as not to alarm the retired couple in the next apartment.

Three days later came another envelope: blue, expensive, feminine. The enclosed letter, reeking of wild passion, was from "Smitten." She, among many other sizzling endearments, moaned, "I dream of you every night, every single night, Professor Murray. I churn, seethe, ache—nay, I'm not ashamed to say it—I lust for you. I thank the lucky mistake that caused me to sign up accidentally for anthropology instead of for what I really wanted, archaeology. Imagine what I would have missed, never to have been intimately associated with you, you who come to me in my dreams, you the slender, darkhaired, divine hunter, magnificent in your . . . your . . . dare I say it . . . I dare . . . in your barely adequate leopardskin loincloth, while I, your tawny, musk-smelling woman, wait naked in the summer moonlight under the murmuring jacaranda tree, aflame with desire for your return from the gory, bloodsplattered hunt in the long ago and faraway Upper Paleolithic."

Well, that perked him up. A stay-at-home stick-in-the-mud, eh? Not quite. He cut back to five pills a day. In class, gazing down at twenty-two nubile females, at least half of them blondes, he wondered which was Smitten. Was she that lovely Gail from Pittsburgh, a golden-haired beauty? Or was it flaxen-haired Lynn from Pottstown? Smitten was a blonde, of course. Blondes were always the most enchanting. Too bad he couldn't seek her out. Stop that, he warned himself. Your position is precarious enough without planning to violate the strict rule against unseemly fraternization. But it was uplifting, reassuring, satisfying, to know that a young girl—blonde and beautiful and intelligent, too—seethed and lusted for one. It affected him so strongly that he even told several little anthropological jokes in class, something he had never done before. The girls, surprised at this sudden outburst, giggled nervously. He told no more jokes.

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Meantime he kept thinking furiously, brainstorming, trying to come up with an unusual, different, controversial subject for his paper. But each time he seemed close to a new idea or to a new angle on an old theme, blondes intruded upon his thoughts; gorgeous blondes, reeking of musk and wanton desire. He upped his daily pill consumption again and began taking several cold showers each day.

He found his subject during the latter part of April, two serendipitous occurrences, barely three days apart, planting the seed that burst into fruition in a dream a few nights later.

First, on a lovely Monday afternoon while he was walking from Old Main to the library, eyes straight ahead, pretending a proper professorial detachment from the bevies of bikini-clad girls sunning in fetching postures on the greensward, his glance fell upon a piece of paper on the walk. He stopped, picked it up, saw that it was a current Pennsylvania State Lottery ticket. A sure winner, he thought jokingly—his mood was improving daily. He was tempted to throw it away, but that would be littering. He pocketed it.

Next morning's paper listed the week's winners. His ticket had won one thousand dollars. When he collected his winnings, his conscience bothered him. Maybe the real owner needed the money. But there was no way to locate the owner. An ad in the paper would have brought an army of impostors. So he cashed the check, put fifty dollars in an envelope, and sent it anonymously to the local humane society. He felt much better after that.

Then, on Thursday afternoon that same week, following his afternoon class, he found an empty bench on the sunny side of Old Main, took a deep breath of the fragrant spring air, opened the latest issue of *The Journal of Cultural Anthropology* to the lead article, "Exogamy Versus Incest Taboos" by a young Harvard professor, and nearly lost his life. Twenty seconds, even less, after he sat down a maniacal redbreasted robin whose territory Professor Murray had apparently invaded zoomed out of a nearby forsythia bush, shrieking fowl-mouthed imprecations. Murray ducked his head just as the streaking robin sped by, missing the professor's left eye by a scant eyelash. Undaunted, the furious little ornithological warrior slammed on the brakes and wheeled back to the attack, still screeching foul language.

But the target had fled from the bench, leaped across the sidewalk, and then fallen ignominiously to the grass. Arms raised to protect his face, Murray looked back over his shoulder just in time

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to witness the huge chunk of stone cornice that had fallen from atop Old Main hit the bench with a loud, shattering sound, sending splinters and a few pathetic feathers flying into the warm spring air.

It took Murray, ashen-faced and wobbly-kneed, a good fifteen minutes to break away from the concerned crowd that gathered. Yes, yes, he agreed, for the fifteenth time, he was certainly a lucky man, a very lucky man. Think what would have happened had not that poor dumb little bird attacked him. My goodness, wouldn't it have been terrible, just terrible. Someone said it looked like Old Main was falling apart.

For the next two or three nights sleep came late and it was rife with dreams. Hordes of screaming robins, a new species, red-breasted as of yore but with golden blonde heads, dived at him from all sides. He tried reasoning with the birds, promising never again to eat a single piece of chicken. They sneered and cackled derisively. Three nights after the frightening Old Main incident, a new dream appeared. It was summer in a primitive land. Moonbeams danced on a purling river. A sighing breeze wandered through a grove of yellow-flowered trees. There was a strong smell of musk, then a flash of light, throaty laughter, and—as Murray's heart skipped a beat—there wriggled into view a voluptuous female, a silvery wand in her hand, her long blonde tresses caressing her bare buttocks.

She spoke: low, sensual, earthy, brazen.

She reminded him of his recent good fortune—the return of his wallet, the love letter from Smitten, the winning lottery ticket, the miraculous escape from the huge cornice stone. There, she cooed, her voice promising delights unheard-of, is your theme: chance, happenstance, fortuity, luck.

"Who . . . are . . . you?" Murray managed to gasp in his sleep.

"I am Lady Luck," she replied, boldly flaunting her copious charms. "And contrary to all that's been said of me, I am as unchanging as the rising sun, the falling leaf, the ebbing tide, the dying day. I am the one immutable, predictable force in the whole chaotic universe. How stupid of humanity to regard me as improbable, unpredictable, a bolt from the blue, a frivolous coquette swayed by every random wooer. I am supreme, everlasting, eternal; without me . . . " That was all because just then, outside the apartment, a 1971 Plymouth backfired with a mighty noise and Murray came awake with a vengeance. One second the Golden Goddess of

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Chance was there, naked and alluring, her flaxen hair waving in the hot summer night's breeze, then she was gone. It had lasted a moment. It had lasted an eternity.

It took a while for Professor Murray to come back to reality. Then, after turning on his bed lamp, he grabbed paper and pencil and scribbled frantically for an hour. Everything is chance, he wrote, accident, hap and hazard. We rise or fall through happenstance. We have to be born lucky, healthy, with the right genes. Then it's mainly good luck or bad luck; the wrong road taken, the snake in the grass, the wayward bullet striking the St. Christopher's medal, the falling cornice, the screaming bird, the roll of the dice, the luck of the devil. Didn't life itself begin with a chance bolt from the blue, a bolt of lightning striking the proper mixture of primordial soup, eons and eons ago? Luck, wrote Murray, is the main factor in success. All else—talent, intelligence, education, ambition, perseverance—is secondary. Blondes are lucky to have been born blondes, he wrote.

Later that morning, while shaving, he let out a loud "Eureka!," causing the couple next door, over coffee and TV, to wonder what good fortune had hit the quiet, solemn, melancholy professor.

What had suddenly hit him—a true bolt from the blue—was his remembering something the nonpareil of anthropology, Charles Darwin, had written: "I verily believe that free will and chance are synonymous."

By semester's end Murray had completed over a hundred pages—he was aiming high, writing an entire book, not a fifteen- or twenty-page paper—of the first draft of *The Role of Chance*, a tentative title. His theme was that species survive and prosper not by natural selection, as Darwin claimed, but by sheer chance.

Take the oyster, insisted Murray. Oysters have been around for millions of years. About one in a million oyster eggs becomes an adult. The eggs are shed in water. They become larvae. At a precise stage of development, the larva must accidentally collide with a hard object and attach itself to the object. Those larvae that do so become full-grown oysters, chance alone being responsible.

Many large Pleistocene species such as the mammoth, the big-horned bison, wrote Murray, became extinct due to misfortune in the form of lightning fires on the grassy plains that destroyed the food supply. Others were so unfortunate as to have been the only

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species in a particular area when big-game hunting Amerindians (they functioned in the Upper Paleolithic) devised ingenious schemes for killing them: stampeding the animals over cliffs, bottling them up in ravines, setting fire to the grasslands. The Amerindians wiped out the horse in North and South America, only to fall victim to the Spanish cavalry riding Old World horses.

The unlucky dinosaurs perished abruptly at the end of the Cretaceous Period because of sudden geological or climactic changes. Pale, pallid, wispy species of flowers died out because bees found colorful flowers more attractive. Volcanoes exploded, floods devastated vast areas, prolonged drought killed hundreds of unlucky species. Glaciers, creeping inexorably south, annihilated many others in cul-de-sacs in mountain valleys.

Homo sapiens, modern man, said Murray, is either lucky or unlucky. Americans are lucky, millions of them being alive today because their parents or grandparents came here to escape poverty and persecution in Europe. Granted, that shows the ultimate in adaptation, fleeing a hostile environment, on the part of the emigrants, but their offspring were lucky to have had those particular parents.

Many of today's rich were born rich, fortunate inheritors of wealth accumulated by their forebears. Some of us are born impaired. Others are born with physical attributes that modern society admires. Ninety percent of the men and women who achieve success in today's world, were they scrupulously honest, would have to admit that Lady Luck gave them many a nudge in the early going. It's all luck, good and bad, the roll of the dice, the phase of the moon, the bend of the twig, the wheel of fortune, the law of probability.

Protocol demanded that Murray pay a goodbye-for-the-summer call on Dean Pelham. The visit was short, Pelham being about to depart for Tanzania and the Olduvai Gorge where he planned to snoop around with the hope of finding something or other that would enable him to dispute two or three of the Leakey family's conclusions in the next edition of his textbook.

In answer to an abrupt question about whether he had made any progress on his paper, Murray replied—with confidence this time—that, yes, he was making good progress.

"Hmmm," was all Pelham had to say to that. Probably didn't believe it, thought Murray.

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Just before Murray headed for a rented cabin on a treelined lake in the Poconos he sustained a bitter deflation to his newly burgeoning ego. Smitten—he had concluded that it actually was Gail from Pittsburgh—tanned now and exquisitely desirable, came rushing up to him after commencement, gowned and adorable, to introduce him to Walter, from Ohio State. "We're to be married tomorrow. Wish us well, professor."

Walter, a huge sheepish hulk, grinned foolishly but kept his mammoth arms tightly entwined around Smitten, the pressure pushing her adorable breasts upward and outward.

"Good luck . . . " was all Murray was able to manage through clenched teeth. ("What's with him, baby?" Murray heard the hulk say as the two went blissfully down the walk—she, like the others, out of his life forever.) In his heart, though, he wished them the worst of luck, misfortune in copious bundles, lots and lots of it. *They're all alike, he thought bitterly; sneaky, sly, cruel blondes.* Just because an accident of fate gave them a special advantage over ordinary women was no reason for them to flaunt their gilded wiles, to make false promises, to sing their wicked, perfumed siren song, to lure, to entice, to entrap, to slither and wriggle, to coil their flaxen hair like slimy, poisoned tenacles around obsessed victims—

Harsh thoughts from one whose "Anthropological Blonde" had called blonde women the luckiest of all.

But once in his isolated, utilitarian—no phone, no TV—cabin on the lake, he forced himself to forget all about perfidious blondes. He was up at dawn, typed until noon, ate a quick lunch, took a short walk around the lake, went back to work. And it wasn't easy. It was tough; distractions abounded. The place teemed with birds. They sang like mad from dawn to late at night. He put cotton in his ears to thwart the incessant chirps, cheeps, peeps, twitters, and God knows what else. One bad morning when the chorus was loud enough to penetrate the cotton, he vowed that if it kept up he was going back to eating chicken, breaking his promise of several months back. He didn't, though. He merely put in a thicker wad of cotton.

A more awesome intrusion was the large wooden raft anchored fifty yards out in the lake. Tawny Loreleis in teeny tiny bikinis frolicked there with suntanned college boys from late morning until late afternoon, and Murray's front window opened on the lake. After the first day he kept the blind pulled down, but temptation

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slithered in through the window one early evening, just at sunset. He got up from his chair, stretched, took out the cotton plugs, raised the blind. A lone creature occupied the raft, the last rays of a hot summer's day bathing her in red and orange and blue and gold. Trembling, he lunged for his binoculars on the shelf above the kitchen sink. He had a terrible time focusing them.

Good God, he moaned. It was true. The tanned nymph was totally naked. She lay supine, her short blonde hair concealing a piece of an ear, a part of an eye, the tip of the pert little nose. Good God, moaned Murray again, is nothing sacred? She was Eve, his mother, Emily, Smitten, all the lush golden sirens from the movies, from the French, the Dutch, the Italian painters; shameless, wicked, wanton Jezebels. His feverish thoughts were interrupted when she stood up, stretched lazily—Murray had to grab the edge of the sink to keep from keeling over—found her little yellow bikini, wriggled into it, and, topless in the silent twilight, dived into the lake and swam to the far shore.

Murray was unable to write a single coherent sentence for two solid days. Damn them, curse them, he fumed, always slithering and wriggling into my life, wreaking havoc. Eight pills, over the two days, finally soothed the stormy waters. Late one night, under a brooding moon, he heaved the binoculars far out into the lake. They made a funny little sad splash which poor Murray interpreted to mean, "Why me? It wasn't my fault." Murray tried to explain to the binoculars that they were an accessory and as such had to be punished.

Cooped up like a hermit, deliberately avoiding all contact with human beings, he had taken to holding conversations with non-humans: the crummy old toaster, the wheezy window air conditioner, the moon, the stars, the murmuring trees, and especially Gerald, a wistful little bushy-tailed squirrel that had appeared at the cabin door one morning in early June.

Gerald was a good listener. All he asked was to be fed. Murray provided breakfast (toast, bacon, beans from a can), just the one meal. He explained to Gerald that he was writing a book and had to concentrate and could only spare Gerald a few minutes every morning. That was okay with Gerald.

Mainly, though, Murray talked to his typewriter, cooing to it, urging it onward, pleading with it to keep going, keep pounding away, keep putting one word after the other ("Come on, old boy, we'll show them, we'll show them. Wait'll they see what we have

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done. They'll want us at Harvard and Columbia, too . . . come on . . . come on . . . ").

Back at work after the near catastrophe of The Nude at Twilight, the window blind glued and nailed shut, Murray managed to regain the drive, the intensity, the seething determination that had come over him when Lady Luck appeared to him in the startling dream. And by the middle of July he had completed the first draft. He raced into town in his six-year-old Pontiac, had copies made of the first two chapters, mailed them along with a four-page outline to six New York publishers. Then, back at the lonely cabin, he cried for a long, stormy evening as lightning zigzagged through a black sky and the wind howled, the lake churned, rain slashed at his little monastic retreat.

He cried again, longer this time, in early August when he finished the last draft. He had done it, had written two hundred and twelve pages of a wry, witty, wise, wonderful, whimsical history of the part that Chance plays in the survival of the species, in the lives of modern men. He deserved to cry. He had triumphed over formidable obstacles: the constant torrent of birdsong; the deliciously mesmerizing effect of lazy summer days when loafing is so sublime and work so easy to put off; the day-long noises from the raft (squeals, yells, shouts, laughter, splashes, rock and roll from the portable radios). He had lost sleep, lost weight, lost shirt buttons, lost contact with humanity. But he had done it. He had written his book. He cried for a long time.

Next morning when Gerald appeared, Murray cooked two extra pieces of bacon for the little fellow. Gerald devoured everything, thumped his tail to show his appreciation, and then hurried off, bent on important squirrel business. Came dusk. Murray, shivering in the August heat—it was ninety-two outside—ripped the blind from the window. Damnit, he swore, why did I throw away the binoculars. It didn't matter. She wasn't there. She had, like all the others, used him. And then she had vanished; gone to Texas with an oily slob; slithered off to Florida with a used-yacht mountebank; married a brobdignagian oaf with a silly grin and big paws. Just like Eve, the evil Goddess of the Dying Dusk had swum off with the serpent, their bodies entwined.

"They're all alike, every duplicitous one of them," he raved to Gerald at breakfast next morning. Gerald, obviously baffled by a brand new polysyllable, nevertheless thumped agreement. He had gotten used to Murray's pessimistic outlook. Something to do with

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girls, Gerald surmised. Were Gerald able to communicate, he would have acknowledged that he knew nothing about human girls. Now, if the subject were squirrel girls, well, that would be different. Also, would you mind cooking the bacon a little longer. Please.

Great, wonderful, superlative news arrived via registered mail during the very last week of August, the September first deadline but a few days away and Murray on the verge of total collapse. A prestigious publisher was extremely interested in Professor Murray's book. Could the professor bring the completed work to New York within the next day or so? No specific promise was made, but the implication was that if the rest of the book equaled the first two chapters, there was a good possibility that the book would fill a void in next summer's list. It was a bit too late to make the Christmas list.

Murray cried, sobbed, whimpered. Then, floating on air, he raced into town. He got a haircut ("Please do a good job," he begged the barber. "I'm to be on TV talk shows soon."). The barber didn't seem impressed, but he did such a good job that Murray tipped him five dollars. Next he bought a three-piece blue suit, a shirt and tie to go with it, new socks, a new pair of shoes.

He slept very little that night. Up early, he gave Gerald a huge breakfast and a long tight hug. Poor Gerald had never been humanly hugged and he felt a little embarrassed, but he went along with it without protest.

He drove to Scranton and took a morning flight to LaGuardia. Seething with excitement, he got out of a taxi on Lexington Avenue, paid the driver, and as the taxi pulled away from the curb he suddenly realized that he had left his manuscript on the back seat. He screamed, raced to the cab, which had braked to a stop with a hideous squeal.

"Forgive me, forgive me," shouted Murray as he wrenched open the back door, reached in, retrieved his treasured manuscript. "I'm sorry . . . really I am . . . please forgive me."

"That's okay, prof," said the cabbie, making a good guess. "That ain't the first time it's happened. So long."

Murray didn't go directly into the building. Instead he walked to the end of the block, turned, and, a bit more composed now, walked back and entered the building. Oh my God, he thought as the elevator climbed to the sixteenth floor, what if I had lost it? There was the carbon copy back at the cabin, he told himself. But what if he had left the toaster connected. My God, the place would

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burn down. But what if it did? He had the original right with him. Stop it, stop it, he told himself, act at ease, quit thinking about such unlikely things.

He announced himself to the receptionist, an attractive brunette. She asked him to take a seat while she phoned the inner office. Murray took a seat. He was certain he was going to faint. His heart pounded. His fingernails ached. He could barely breathe. He forced himself to imagine how he would appear on TV. He would be calm and unassuming, and he would want TV hosts and their millions of listeners to realize that his book was in no sense a condemnation of Darwin. Far from it. It was a new approach. No one should ever forget the gigantic contribution that Darwin made to the field of anthropology.

Maybe he should begin wearing glasses. They made one look distinguished.

Time passed. Did he imagine it or was the receptionist really stealing covert glances at him? Several people came, waited a few moments, were admitted to the inner offices. There, she was sneaking a look at him again. Murray wondered if it was his zipper. He checked, everything was in order.

Finally Miss Atkins—Polly, associate editor—appeared, none of the big shots having the guts to give Murray the bad news. Miss Atkins escorted Murray into one of the small rooms off the lobby. She sat down at a desk, Murray took a seat opposite.

"Did you have a nice trip up, Professor Murray?" she said, her voice quivering just a bit.

Murray felt an icy chill. Something was amiss. Something was wrong. He could tell.

"Something's wrong, isn't it, Miss . . . ?"

"Atkins," she stammered. "I'm afraid I have bad news, Professor Murray. It's dreadful . . . I'm so sorry. Really I am . . . I know how much . . . "

"What bad news," demanded Murray leaning over the desk, his eyes piercing Miss Atkins, a petite brunette.

"We attempted to get in touch with you, Professor Murray," she said, "but apparently you have no phone in your summer place . . . and, well, we mailed you an express overnight letter late yesterday afternoon . . . I suppose you didn't receive it?"

"I didn't receive it, Miss Atkins," hissed Murray. "What did the letter say?"

"Oh my," wailed Miss Atkins. She had been with the company

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for three years but had never encountered such an awful situation. She reached into the top drawer of the desk, brought out a book, handed it to Murray.

The wrapper was so new he thought he could still smell the printer's ink. There was a dazzling blonde woman on the cover, an alluring smile on her lovely face. She wore something small and diaphanous. She was seated on a large rock on a cliff, high above an ocean shore. Far below, surf pounded against the rocky headland, foam rose, a rainbow arched against a blue sky, a flash of lightning pierced the very center of the rainbow. The book had a title: *Life, Luck, Survival.* The author was the half-naked blonde on the cover, Dr. Merryanne Cabot Lloyd, associate professor of anthropology at some California university.

A telephone rang somewhere. The elevator swished to a stop out in the hall. Miss Atkins toyed nervously with an ugly little metal statue of a Haitian voodoo god that she had brought back from the Caribbean a week ago. Murray began to make odd noises. Miss Atkins eased closer to the edge of her chair. She felt she ought to say something.

"It's almost unbelievable, Professor Murray," she managed, "that Dr. Lloyd, just exactly like you . . . for her to have selected the very same theme. . . . It's . . . it's astonishing how two minds, separated by . . . well, she's from California and you are from Pennsylvania . . . What a terrible, unfortunate coincidence for you, Professor Murray. When we came across this pre-publication copy—Baldwin and Bates is one of our toughest competitors, Professor Murray—well, we thought poor Professor Murray, how awful he's going to feel. We had high hopes for your manuscript. But, of course, now . . . well . . . are you all right, Professor Murray?"

No, he wasn't all right. Of course not. He had gotten deathly pale. He trembled. He twitched. Those funny little moans kept whimpering past his open lips. He kept staring at the cover of *Life, Luck, Survival.* Wasn't she, Dr. Lloyd, underneath that black, gauzy, frilly nightgown . . . wasn't she, a fellow certified anthropologist, wasn't she . . . of course she was . . . nearly topless?

"Is that what she wore to class?" Murray snarled, suddenly jerking his head from the book and piercing Miss Atkins with a mad stare.

"Hee, hee," giggled poor Miss Atkins. "Of course she couldn't have taught . . . I mean . . . oh, Professor Murray, I understand how awful you must feel. . . . "

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"Slut," interrupted Murray, his burning eyes back to the book. "They're all alike. Every one of them. She's just like Mother, like Emily, like Smitten, like that naked college girl on the raft at twilight, like Lady Luck . . . yes, like Lady Luck who tricked me, tricked me, tricked me. They're all selfish, grasping, perfidious, sneaky, teasing and taunting, cooing and wooing . . . "

"Cooing and wooing?" squealed Miss Atkins, unintentionally, certain she was face to face with a madman.

"Laced with perfume and duplicity," snarled Murray.

Suddenly Murray jumped from the chair. He threw the book to the floor.

He grabbed the metal voodoo statue, looked at Miss Atkins, and said, softly, slowly, "You're an extremely fortunate young lady, Miss Atkins, extremely fortunate."

Miss Atkins, cute little Polly, didn't think so. Stout heart pounding in her taut little bosom, she shook her head back and forth, back and forth, indicative of a completely opposite opinion.

"Because," went on Murray, speaking slowly, distinctly, enunciating every syllable, "were you a blonde, a lewd yellow-haired strumpet like the others, instead of a pretty little brunette, you would have the honor of being the first to die, the first to expiate all the lives they have ruined. You see, Miss Atkins, sweet brunette—what a cute little nose you have. Has anyone ever told you that you have a cute little nose?"

Jimmie, dear Jimmie, at Penn State had.

So had Scott.

And only last week . . .

"Oh, Professor Murray," she wailed, "Please . . . please . . . may I go now?"

"Not yet," he snarled. "Not yet. Let me finish what I was saying. As I said, you're fortunate you're dark-haired. If you weren't, I'd have to kill you because I am going to rid the whole world of all blondes, every single rotten, filthy blonde."

That did it. Miss Atkins had stayed far too long at the fair. She sprang from her chair. She hit her knee aginst the leg of the desk. She howled in anguish. She fell to the floor. She crawled frantically across the floor, rump uppermost, dignity forgotten. She made it to the closest door. She pulled herself up. She flung open the door. She flew into the inner office and bowled over two senior editors and a recently hired blonde secretary who were lollygagging a good fifteen minutes beyond afternoon coffee break.

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Margaret—Maggie O'Callahan, out in Queens—saw the brief story on the six o'clock news. A young woman had been murdered in a midtown elevator. The alleged perpetrator had been captured—he had offered no resistance—and had been taken to Bellevue where he remained, deeply sedated, under heavy guard. More details on the eleven o'clock news.

Maggie had a cold beer ready when Detective Timothy Michael O'Callahan of Midtown North Precinct reached home around eight fifteen. She let him finish the first beer before she started the questions.

"Saw you on TV, Tim," she said. "You didn't tell them very much."

"There wasn't much to tell right then, Mag. We didn't know exactly what had happened. Just that a young girl—poor thing was only nineteen—had been bludgeoned to death in the building elevator and that Building Security had apprehended the suspect."

"So?"

"Here it is from the beginning, as much as we know now, which is about ninety percent. The killer, nothing alleged, he did it, was one William Murray, tall, thin, handsome fellow, professor at a girls' school near Philadelphia. He was in the building to talk over a book he had written with Thomas and Nottingham, publishers."

"Go on, Tim, go on, I'm on pins and needles."

"Okay. The prof goes out to the lobby, scares hell out of the receptionist, telling her he's gonna wipe out all the blondes in New York and then he's heading for California to take care of them out there. She said he was raving and swinging the statue when she jumped up and ran inside."

"Well, go on, what happened next?"

"Two young women, a brunette name of Tony Pastore and the victim, about nineteen, pretty name, Heather Meadows, got on the elevator on the twenty-fourth floor. Pastore works for an advertising agency there and was taking some papers to a client over on Fifth. The blonde, poor kid, only been in town a week, came from Cleveland, gonna be a bigtime model like all of them. And who knows, she mighta made it. She sure had the looks and shape for it."

"H'mm," h'mmed Maggie. "Well . . . what happened?"

"It wasn't very pretty, Mag, not very pretty. Pastore said the prof got on the elevator, pressed the down button, turned around,

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saw the two girls, focused on the blonde, Heather, and yelled something like, 'Well, at last this is my lucky day,' and then hit the poor girl a hell of a blow alongside the head with that damn voodoo statue. Hit her four or five more times before Pastore realized what the hell was going on. Pastore yelled to high heaven, jumped on the prof—she clawed him up pretty good—but by then it was all over. Funny thing, Mag, Pastore said the prof never hurt her. Kept pushing her away and saying he wasn't going to hurt her, that she wasn't bad like the others and that he was doing the world a favor getting rid of blondes."

"My God," gasped Maggie, "he musta gotten a bad deal from some golddigging blonde to take it so hard."

"Yeah, that's what we figure," said Tim. "Anyway, that's about it. With all the screaming Pastore was doing they heard her down in Security—there's a two-way communication system in case there's trouble like losing power and that kind of thing—and two of the security men finally got the elevator stopped on the main floor—the prof kept kicking the buttons, running it up and down. Someone called the cops and that was that."

"The professor didn't try to run away?"

"Nope. Stayed right there, quiet as a mouse. Didn't say much except that would we please take care of Gerald, give him his breakfast and be sure not to overcook the bacon, Gerald liking it not too well done." (How little we know, we humans.) "We tried to find out who Gerald was, where he lived, other facts, but the prof told us not to worry, that Gerald would show up every morning."

"Is that all there is to the case?" said Maggie.

"Except for the clincher. If it hadn't been for bad luck, that poor little Heather would be alive right this very minute."

"Whatta you mean, Tim?"

"We got it from Pastore. The blonde was in the wrong building on the wrong street. She had an appointment on Third Avenue. Being new to town she made a mistake and ended up in the building on Lexington. Pastore said the girl felt like a fool. Told her she was going to be late for her appointment and probably lose out on a job. Pastore was telling her to take it easy, that things usually work out for the best, when the prof got on the elevator."

"The poor dear," sighed Maggie. "How awful. Talk about being in the wrong place at the wrong time. How unlucky can a person get?"

The phone rang in the living room. Maggie went to answer it.

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She came back in a moment.

"It's the precinct. Sounds like Joey Simmons."

Tim went to the phone.

"That was about that poor girl, wasn't it?" said Maggie when he came back.

"Yeah. Joey Simmons finally located the aunt over in Jersey where the victim was staying until she could take off on her own. Listen to this one, Mag; that girl was no more blonde than you are. The aunt said her niece spent most of yesterday in a beauty parlor having her hair dyed. Her aunt said she tried hard to talk her out of it, saying her niece had the prettiest coal black hair you ever saw. Seemed the poor girl was hell-bent on being a blonde, claiming blondes got all the lucky breaks."

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph," whispered Maggie, and then made a quick sign of the cross.

Autumn came early to the Poconos. It was quiet now. The birds were gone. So were the summer girls and boys, gone back to school. The trees changed color, the leaves began to fall, and the little scampering creatures of the wild prepared for the coming winter. Gerald, the bushy-tailed squirrel, came early every morning, just as he had all summer long, to the little white cottage on the hill above the lake. He thumped and thumped on the door. It remained closed. That puzzled Gerald. But he kept coming, morning after morning. It wasn't only the bacon, it was his good friend, the human being. But finally, on a cold, grey morning with the fallen leaves rustling sadly in the chilly wind, Gerald gave up.

He felt sad. He was only a dumb squirrel and he couldn't reason, but he had an ache inside. He sensed that his kind, sweet, human friend would never be back. It had been a wonderful summer, almost perfect. If only the bacon had been cooked a little longer.

SOLUTION TO THE JANUARY "UNSOLVED":

Part I: Clark poisoned Doyle.
Part II: Ray's wife was the murderer's wife.

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FICTION

Murder Figures

by David Braly

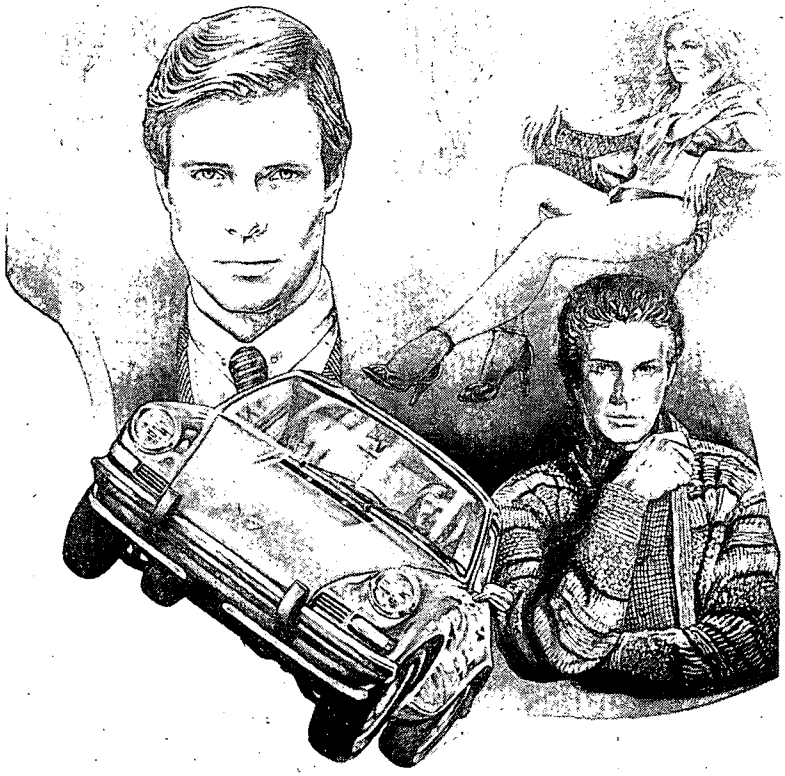


Illustration by Ray Lago

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Sheriff Leo Austin watched the attendants shove the gurney into the rear of the ambulance. Blood had already soaked through the sheet that covered the dead man. Little wonder. The attendants and deputies had been forced to pry his body out of the wrecked Porsche with crowbars.

Austin looked down at the blue Porsche again. It was more than a hundred feet below, almost halfway to the bottom of the hillside. Nothing remained of it except twisted steel. After the 1984 model car had slammed through the guard rail it had bounced and tumbled all the way down. Austin had been a car buff since adolescence, but the only way he'd found out the make and model of that wreck had been by radioing its license plate number to the Motor Vehicles Division.

The same had been true of the driver. The man's face had looked like a smashed tomato, and only by checking the license registration had the sheriff learned that he was Franklin Snell, the sheriff's own accountant.

Snell lived in one of the big shoreline houses at Seaview Resort, an expensive development fifteen miles from the county seat and Austin's home town of Mountainview. The lots at Seaview started at thirty thousand. Strict "community" controls by the development company over the "quality" of houses built by lot purchasers insured that no house was constructed there for less than two hundred thousand. But Franklin Snell could pay that freight. Sheriff Austin was one of his few poor clients. His more usual clientele consisted of the richest people and largest corporations in the tri-county area.

Austin looked beyond the Porsche. A small creek meandered through a green field that lay at the bottom of the hillside. The field spread two miles before reaching the ponderosa pine forest. It looked peaceful and quiet this beautiful and warm summer morning. Austin could hear several birds singing. The sky was wonderfully blue, with only one small puff of cumulus far, far up. Franklin Snell was going to miss a fine day. He would never have noticed it, though. He'd been a workaholic who shut himself up in his small office in Mountainview from six in the morning until nine at night six days a week.

Deputy Yaeger stepped up to Austin's side. The ambulance began its journey to Mountainview.

"Boy-oh-boy," said Yaeger, looking at the wreck. "This is one of the worst accidents I've ever seen."

"It wasn't an accident."

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"Huh?"

"Look at the skid marks," said Austin, nodding towards the shattered portion of the long white guard rail. "He braked when he was coming on straight, then turned sharply."

"You think maybe he swerved to avoid a deer?"

"Perhaps. Some people do it without thinking and end up killing themselves. But I doubt it. It's straight up two hundred feet on one side of the road and straight down more than that on the other side. No deer likely around here. Besides, I knew Franklin Snell. He might've made a mistake, but I don't believe it."

Yaeger stared at the skid marks. They striped the asphalt like two lines of black paint. "You think he was forced over?" asked the deputy.

"Yes."

The next fortnight was devoted to tracking down Snell's clients and friends. Sheriff Austin found the task easier than he had anticipated. Snell didn't have many friends, just a few neighbors out at Seaview Resort and a handful of cronies at the country club. His clients were mostly limited to business and professional people, and all of their names were on a large Rolodex. Because Snell had been murdered early in the morning, it was not difficult to confirm alibis. And most of Snell's friends and clients had alibis.

Three associates of the accountant couldn't prove their whereabouts: Janice Talbot, a girlfriend who lived next door to Snell's house; Chuck Linn, president and founder of Linn Industries, a holding company that owned three other Linn firms; and Tom Garrison, an architect who won design awards with the same regularity that rich senators win honorary degrees. All claimed Snell as their friend, and all were Snell's clients.

Of the three, Austin found Janice Talbot the most interesting. Not because he was a forty-two-year-old bachelor and she was one of the most beautiful women in the county —although he was and she was—but because she was the only suspect of the three who admitted to fighting with Snell shortly before his death.

Janice Talbot was thirty-one years old, tan, tall, sleek, shapely, with long black hair and the sort of lengthy, firm, curved, beautiful legs which used to appear in Al Capp comic strips—and I don't mean on Li'l Abner. She was also rich. Janice was the only child and sole heir (her mother died when she was four) of the dynamic Eastern Shore tycoon Wilcox Tal-

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bot, known to the public as "King Talbot" and to his friends as "Bunny." Although Talbot's fortune had been seriously depleted during the early seventies, when he died his daughter inherited more than twenty million dollars. At least that's what the news media claimed.

"Sure I fought with him the day before he died," Janice admitted. She was seated across from Sheriff Austin in a wicker chair on the second-story deck of her seaside house. The sea and sky behind her were blue, the air warm, and the sounds distant.

"What was the fight about?"

"Marriage." She shifted her legs. They were bare. She was dressed in a bikini with a light pink sweater thrown around her shoulders. Her appearance, and her leg movements, were distracting Austin, and she knew it and she enjoyed it. Yes, Janice Talbot was that type. "He didn't want to, but I did."

"Let me get this straight. You wanted to marry him but he didn't want to marry you?"

"Right."

"That's cr—well, I mean . . . "

"Yeah, that's crazy. Plain crazy. I never did understand him, but I did love him."

When Austin returned to his office, he dug out Snell's files on Janice Talbot. If there was no outward personal reason for her to kill him, perhaps there was a financial reason.

The files revealed that Janice Talbot owned all the stock in Talbot Traction Corporation, which had twenty million dollars in assets and eight million in liabilities, the latter consisting mostly of bank debts to institutions in New York and Boston. She had personal property worth two million, no mortgages, and debts of a hundred and twenty thousand, mostly to department stores and jewelry stores in New York, London, Los Angeles, and Houston, but also payments due on real estate she'd acquired in Las Vegas.

In an entirely different way and for entirely different reasons, Chuck Linn was almost as fascinating to Austin as had been Janice Talbot. It had nothing to do with his physical appearance, although women probably found the six foot two inch bachelor attractive. He had sharply chiseled features that were handsome and hard. He was a lean, tough man who'd come up the ladder of success fast.

That was what Austin found fascinating. A half dozen years ago Linn was a nobody, a hometown boy who'd managed to start a general contracting business that employed four men on a more or less permanent basis. Linn Construction

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Company had been worth perhaps two hundred thousand before its liabilities were subtracted. Then, suddenly, within a period of half a year, three new firms appeared: Linn Industries, Inc.; Linn Real Estate, Inc.; and Mountainview Farms, Inc. Today thirty-six-year-old Chuck Linn was widely regarded as the county's richest citizen—richer than even Janice Talbot.

"What can I say?" asked Linn. He was seated behind a mahogany desk in the library of his hilltop house. He had other houses on the farms and ranches he owned outside town, but this was the one he actually lived in. "I was asleep in bed that morning. The staff isn't live-in."

"When was the last time you saw Mr. Snell?" Austin asked.

"At the country club two days before he was killed."

"Did you have any disputes with him?"

"None."

"When was the last time you were on the road that goes to Seaview Resort?"

Linn leaned back in his leather chair as though absorbed in thought. Then he said: "Four or five months ago. I went out to see Janice Talbot on a personal matter."

"Were you aware that Janice Talbot was Mr. Snell's girlfriend?"

"She wasn't at that time, sheriff. And if you're thinking that jealousy might have been a motive for me to kill Franklin, forget it. Janice Talbot is nothing but trouble. If she fishes, I'll bet you twenty bucks that she's the type who hooks and then frees."

"What's wrong with that?"

"Using a barbed hook."

Although Linn didn't realize it, he'd just confirmed part of what Janice Talbot had told Austin. Until that moment Austin hadn't believed her story. He knew Snell well enough to know that the man had been greedy. Austin had found it impossible to believe that a man like Snell would turn away one of the most beautiful women in the county, one who also happened to be the richest. But Linn's description of her character meant that Snell might have done exactly that. Like Austin had told Yaeger, Snell wasn't the sort to make mistakes. Beauty and money aside, marrying someone like Janice Talbot, as described by Chuck Linn, would've been a super mistake.

"Even if I'd been on that road," said Linn, "I couldn't have gone after him—if I'd wanted to, that is. Until I read it in the newspaper, I didn't know Snell had a new car."

"I thought you saw him at the club two days before he died?"

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Linn looked shaken, as though he might've been caught in a lie. "I didn't see his car, I saw him. The last time I saw him with a car he had a green Ferrari, not a blue Porsche."

Austin remembered the records on the Porsche: it had been purchased one week before Snell's death.

When Austin returned to his office he dug into Snell's accounting files again and took out the records on Chuck Linn. They revealed that Linn Industries had assets of thirty million, consisting of Linn Construction, Linn Real Estate, and Linn Farms, and that it owed twenty-two million on mortgages held by banks and insurance companies in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Of Chuck Linn's companies, Linn Farms was now the largest, with assets of twenty million, offset by mortgages of twelve million owed to banks in San Diego and Portland. Linn Construction and Linn Real Estate (which owned commercial buildings) had a gross worth of about five million each. Together they had liabilities of seven million in the form of mortgages owed to banks in San Diego, Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle. Chuck Linn had personal property worth three million, against which there were mortgages of two million held by the Mountainview banks and banks in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

"I liked Franklin," said Tom Garrison. "I had no reason to kill him."

Garrison was a short, lean man with curly brown hair and a long, flat face. He wore a screaming red shirt and Madras slacks. He'd been putting his golf bags into the boot of his Toyota station wagon when Austin arrived at his two hundred and fifty thousand dollar house four miles north of town. Austin could see Garrison's wife and two of his four children peeking through the curtains. They probably hadn't seen a police car on their property since their house was burglarized in 1976.

"When was the last time you saw him?" Austin wanted to know.

"A month before his death. I went to his office to talk with him about tax matters."

"And where were you during the morning of his death?"

"In the mountains—working. I have a cabin on Bobcat Creek. It's equipped with a drafting table. Sometimes, when the noise at home or in my office in town is too distracting, I take my Jeep up there."

"Any witnesses?"

"Just to my leaving town. My wife and kids know that I left the house two mornings before

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Franklin crashed through the rail, and my secretary can confirm that I came back to the office later that same morning because I'd forgotten an important notebook."

"When did you learn of his death?"

"When I returned from the cabin. That was the afternoon of the day he died. When Turi told me that Franklin Snell had been killed, I immediately thought of that new Porsche of his. He sometimes drove too fast."

"How did you know?" asked the sheriff.

"Know—know what?"

"That Franklin Snell had a new Porsche. He bought it only a week before his death, yet you claim that you hadn't seen him for a month."

"Janice told me about it."

"Janice Talbot?"

Garrison smiled a wide, idiotic smile. "Yeah," he said dreamily.

Back in the sheriff's office, Austin scanned Snell's records on Garrison's finances. They revealed that Garrison had two million dollars in assets, consisting of his house and its furnishings, his nonworking farm, an undeveloped lot in Mountainview, his office equipment, and a speckle of stock in the Garrison family's ancient firm, Garrison Shipbuilders of San Francisco. Garrison had liabilities of seven hundred thousand, consisting of mortgages on his house, land, and stock held by a San Francisco bank for four hundred thousand, and three hundred thousand due in back taxes, interest, and penalties. That was why Garrison had visited Snell at the latter's office: he was in big trouble with the IRS and the State Revenue Department. Snell's records also showed that Garrison had not received a commission for months, and since his assets were almost all non-income-producing, he was on the brink of financial disaster.

Leo Austin considered the facts in the Snell case, and concluded that the accountant had been forced off the road over the steep hillside for one of three reasons: an unhappy girlfriend; a rival for the girlfriend; or he knew too much about someone's business, possibly to the extent of blackmailing that someone.

He quickly dismissed the first two possibilities. Janice Talbot might have been furious that her beau wouldn't pop the question, but a woman that beautiful and that rich had plenty of companionship to soothe her ego. Chuck Linn didn't think Janice Talbot was worth marrying, let alone worth killing someone to marry, and Tom

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Garrison was already married. True, Garrison could divorce his wife, but he'd have to be farther along in his affair with Janice Talbot than he was now before he took a step like that one. Obviously he didn't know her well. He smiled too quickly at the mention of her name to know her the way Snell and Linn had. If nothing else worked, though, Austin would come back to Garrison. While Garrison might lose a million in community property by divorcing Turi, he could gain several million by marrying Janice. That would take care of his tax problems.

That left the financial side as a motive. And Austin knew that money was the greatest of all incentives for murder. If Snell had discovered something, was blackmailing somebody, he had invited death onto the road with him.

Leo Austin again took out Snell's papers dealing with Janice Talbot, Chuck Linn, and Thomas Garrison, and he examined them one more time. From one o'clock in the afternoon until four o'clock he pored over those papers. He sat behind his cluttered desk in his office in the courthouse and he took no calls while he figured on a scratchpad with his pencil. He even had his window shut against the street noise.

Then he saw the motive for the murder. It had been before him ever since he'd first looked at the figures.

"I'll hand this much to you," said Chuck Linn as his inked thumb was pressed down onto the fingerprint record by a deputy. "You figured out what I'd done with my business a lot faster than Franklin Snell did. He's been my accountant for years.

"How'd you do it, sheriff?"

"I knew there was something there, in one of Snell's files, that opened up one of you people to fear or blackmail. It was just a question of which file. When I looked at your statements the first time, I didn't realize the inconsistency of your having forty million dollars' worth of mortgages on thirty million dollars' worth of property. That's because I only looked at the company names and the liabilities listed against each company. Linn Construction, Linn Real Estate, and Linn Farms had a total worth of thirty million, so that was the gross worth of Linn Industries, which owned all of them. Only when I realized that you had liabilities against Linn Industries—which was a holding company that owned nothing except the other firms—as well as having liabilities listed against those other firms, did I see that you'd mortgaged

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everything twice."

Linn smiled. "Snell saw only the names on the paper until a month ago. Then he realized what I'd done, how I'd built everything so fast. If he hadn't interfered, I could have gone on, gradually making more and more money, until I retired the ghost mortgages."

Austin reached into his shirt pocket and drew a cigarette out. He lit it. "You're like every other crook I ever met, Chuck. Your money and high living doesn't change that attitude. The attitude that says, 'a few more scores and I'll have enough money to retire.' "

Linn looked at the ink on his fingertips and thumbs. "Unfortunately for everyone," he said, "that blackmailer Snell had a similar attitude."

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KATHY TULLY-CESTARO
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MYSTERY CLASSIC

A TIGER'S SKIN

by W. W. Jacobs



Illustration by Hank Blaustein

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The travelling sign painter who was repainting the sign of the Cauliflower was enjoying a well-earned respite from his labors. On the old table under the shade of the elms, mammoth sandwiches and a large slice of cheese waited in an untied handkerchief until such time as his thirst should be satisfied. At the other side of the table the oldest man in Claybury, drawing gently at a long clay pipe, turned a dim and regretful eye up at the old signboard.

"I've drunk my beer under it for pretty near seventy years," he said, with a sigh. "It's a pity it couldn't ha' lasted my time."

The painter, slowly pushing a wedge of sandwich into his mouth, regarded him indulgently.

"It's all through two young gentlemen as was passing through 'ere a month or two ago," continued the old man; "they told Smith, the landlord, they'd been looking all over the place for the Cauliflower, and when Smith showed 'em the sign they said they thought it was the George the Fourth, and a very good likeness, too."

The painter laughed and took another look at the old sign; then, with the nervousness of the true artist, he took a look at his own. One or two shadows—

He flung his legs over the bench and took up his brushes. In ten minutes the most fervent loyalist would have looked in vain for any resemblance, and with a sigh at the pitfalls which beset the artist he returned to his interrupted meal and hailed the house for more beer.

"There's nobody could mistake your sign for anything but a cauliflower," said the old man, "it looks good enough to eat."

The painter smiled and pushed his mug across the table. He was a tender-hearted man, and once—when painting the sign of the Sir Wilfrid Lawson—knew himself what it was to lack beer. He began to discourse on art, and spoke somewhat disparagingly of the cauliflower as a subject. With a shake of his head he spoke of the possibilities of a spotted cow or a blue lion.

"Talking of lions," said the ancient, musingly, "I s'pose as you never 'eard tell of the Claybury tiger? It was afore your time in these parts, I expect."

The painter admitted his ignorance, and, finding that the allusion had no reference to an inn, pulled out his pipe and prepared to listen.

"It's a while ago now," said the old man, slowly, "and the circus the tiger belonged to was going through Claybury to get to Wickham, when, just as they was passing Gill's farm, a steam ingine

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they 'ad to draw some o' the vans broke down, and they 'ad to stop while the blacksmith mended it. That being so, they put up a big tent and 'ad the circus 'ere.

"I was one o' them as went, and I must say it was worth the money, though Henry Walker was disappointed at the man who put 'is 'ead in the lion's mouth. He said that the man frightened the lion first, before 'e did it.

"It was a great night for Claybury, and for about a week nothing else was talked of. All the children was playing at being lions and tigers and such-like, and young Roberts pretty near broke 'is back trying to see if he could ride horseback standing up.

"It was about two weeks after the circus 'ad gone when a strange thing 'appened: the big tiger broke loose. Bill Chambers brought the news first, 'aving read it in the newspaper while 'e was 'aving his tea. He brought out the paper and showed us, and soon after we 'eard all sorts o' tales of its doings.

"At first we thought the tiger was a long way off, and we was rather amused at it. Frederick Scott laughed 'imself silly a'most up 'ere one night thinking 'ow surprised a man would be if 'e come 'ome one night and found the tiger sitting in his armchair eating the baby. It didn't seem much of a laughing matter to me, and I said so; none of us liked it, and even Sam Jones, as 'ad got twins for the second time, said 'Shame!' But Frederick Scott was a man as would laugh at anything.

"When we 'eard that the tiger 'ad been seen within three miles of Claybury things began to look serious, and Peter Gubbins said that something ought to be done, but before we could think of anything to do something 'appened.

"We was sitting up 'ere one evening 'aving a mug o' beer and a pipe—same as I might be now if I'd got any baccy left—and talking about it, when we 'eard a shout and saw a ragged-looking tramp running toward us as 'ard as he could run. Every now and then he'd look over 'is shoulder and give a shout, and then run 'arder than afore.

" 'It's the *tiger!*' ses Bill Chambers, and afore you could wink a'most he was inside the house, 'aving first upset Smith and a pot o' beer in the doorway.

"Before he could get up, Smith 'ad to wait till we was all in. His langwidge was awful for a man as 'ad a license to lose, and everybody shouting 'Tiger!' as they trod on 'im didn't ease 'is mind. He was inside a'most as soon as the last man, though, and in a flash he 'ad the door bolted just as the tramp flung 'imself agin it, all

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out of breath and sobbing 'is hardest to be let in.

" 'Open the door,' he ses, banging on it.

" 'Go away,' ses Smith.

" 'It's the tiger,' screams the tramp; 'open the door.'

" 'You go away,' ses Smith, 'you're attracting it to my place; run up the road and draw it off.'

"Just at that moment John Biggs, the blacksmith, come in from the taproom, and as soon as he 'eard wot was the matter 'e took down Smith's gun from behind the bar and said he was going out to look after the wimmen and children.

" 'Open the door,' he ses.

"He was trying to get out and the tramp outside was trying to get in, but Smith held on to that door like a Briton. Then John Biggs lost 'is temper, and he ups with the gun—Smith's own gun, mind you—and fetches 'im a bang over the 'ead with it. Smith fell down at once, and afore we could 'elp ourselves the door was open, the tramp was inside, and John Biggs was running up the road, shouting 'is hardest.

"We 'ad the door closed afore you could wink a'most and then, while the tramp lay in a corner 'aving brandy, Mrs. Smith got a bowl of water and a sponge and knelt down bathing 'er husband's 'ead with it.

" 'Did you see the tiger?' ses Bill Chambers.

" 'See it?' ses the tramp, with a shiver. 'Oh, Lord!'

"He made signs for more brandy, and Henery Walker, wot was acting as landlord, without being asked, gave it to 'im.

" 'It chased me for over a mile,' ses the tramp; 'my 'eart's breaking.'

"He gave a groan and fainted right off. A terrible faint it was, too, and for some time we thought 'e'd never come round agin. First they poured brandy down 'is throat, then gin, and then beer, and still 'e didn't come round, but lay quiet with 'is eyes closed and a horrible smile on 'is face.

"He came round at last, and with nothing stronger than water, which Mrs. Smith kept pouring into 'is mouth. First thing we noticed was that the smile went, then 'is eyes opened, and suddenly 'e sat up with a shiver and gave such a dreadful scream that we thought at first the tiger was on top of us.

"Then 'e told us 'ow he was sitting washing 'is shirt in a ditch, when he 'eard a snuffling noise and saw the 'ead of a big tiger sticking through the hedge the other side. He left 'is shirt and ran, and 'e said that, fortunately, the tiger stopped to tear the shirt to

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pieces, else 'is last hour would 'ave arrived.

"When 'e 'ad finished Smith went upstairs and looked out of the bedroom winders, but 'e couldn't see any signs of the tiger, and 'e said no doubt it 'ad gone down to the village to see wot it could pick up, or p'raps it 'ad eaten John Biggs.

"However that might be, nobody cared to go outside to see, and after it got dark we liked going 'ome less than ever.

"Up to ten o'clock we did very well, and then Smith began to talk about 'is license. He said it was all rubbish being afraid to go 'ome, and that, at any rate, the tiger couldn't eat more than one of us, and while 'e was doing that there was the chance for the others to get 'ome safe. Two or three of 'em took a dislike to Smith that night and told 'im so.

"The end of it was we all slept in the taproom that night. It seemed strange at first, but anything was better than going 'ome in the dark, and we all slept till about four next morning, when we woke up and found the tramp 'ad gone and left the front door standing wide open.

"We took a careful look-out, and by-and-by first one started off and then another to see whether their wives and children 'ad been eaten or not. Not a soul 'ad been touched, but the wimmen and children was that scared there was no doing anything with 'em. None o' the children would go to school, and they sat at 'ome all day with the front winder blocked up with a mattress to keep the tiger out.

"Nobody liked going to work, but it 'ad to be done and as Farmer Gill said that tigers went to sleep all day and only came out toward evening we was a bit comforted. Not a soul went up to the Cauliflower that evening for fear of coming 'ome in the dark, but as nothing 'appened that night we began to 'ope as the tiger 'ad travelled further on.

"Bob Pretty laughed at the whole thing and said 'e didn't believe there was a tiger; but nobody minded wot 'e said, Bob Pretty being, as I've often told people, the black sheep o' Claybury, wot with poaching and, wot was worse, 'is artfulness.

"But the very next morning something 'appened that made Bob Pretty look silly and wish 'e 'adn't talked quite so fast; for at five o'clock Frederick Scott, going down to feed 'is hins, found as the tiger 'ad been there afore 'im and 'ad eaten no less than seven of 'em. The side of the hin-'ouse was all broke in, there was a few feathers lying on the ground, and two little chicks smashed and dead beside 'em.

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"The way Frederick Scott went on about it you'd 'ardly believe. He said that Govinment 'ud 'ave to make it up to 'im, and instead o' going to work 'e put the two little chicks and the feathers into a pudding basin and walked to Cudford, four miles off, where they 'ad a policeman.

"He saw the policeman, William White by name, standing at the back door of the Fox and Hounds public house, throwing a 'andful o' corn to the landlord's fowls, and the first thing Mr. White ses was, 'it's off my beat,' he ses.

" 'But you might do it in your spare time, Mr. White,' ses Frederick Scott. 'It's very likely that the tiger'll come back to my hin-'ouse for the rest of 'em, and he'd be very surprised if 'e popped 'is 'ead in and see you there waiting for 'im.'

" 'He'd 'ave reason to be,' ses Policeman White, staring at 'im.

" 'Think of the praise you'd get,' said Frederick Scott, coaxing like.

" 'Look 'ere,' ses Policeman White, 'if you don't take yourself and that pudding basin off pretty quick, you'll come along o'me, d'ye see? You've been drinking and you're in a excited state.'

"He gave Frederick Scott a push and follered 'im along the road, and every time Frederick stopped to ask 'im wot 'e was doing of, 'e gave 'im another push to show 'im.

"Frederick Scott told us all about it that evening, and some of the bravest of us went up to the Cauliflower to talk over wot was to be done, through we took care to get 'ome while it was quite light. That night Peter Gubbins's two pigs went. They were two o' the likeliest pigs I ever seed, and all Peter Gubbins could do was to sit up in bed shivering and listening to their squeals as the tiger dragged 'em off. Pretty near all Claybury was round that sty next morning looking at the broken fence. Some of them looked for the tiger's footmarks, but it was dry weather and they couldn't see any. Nobody knew whose turn it would be next, and the most sensible man there, Sam Jones, went straight off 'ome and killed his pig afore 'e went to work.

"Nobody knew what to do; Farmer Hall said as it was a soldier's job, and 'e drove over to Wickham to tell the police so, but nothing came of it, and that night at ten minutes to twelve Bill Chambers's pig went. It was one o' the biggest pigs ever raised in Claybury, but the tiger got it off as easy as possible. Bill 'ad the bravery to look out of the winder when 'e 'eard the pig squeal, but there was such a awful snarling noise that 'e daresn't move 'and or foot.

"Dicky Weed's idea was for people with pigs and such-like to

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keep 'em in the house of a night, but Peter Gubbins and Bill Chambers both pointed out that the tiger could break a back door with one blow of 'is paw, and that if 'e got inside he might take something else instead o' pig. And they said that it was no worse for other people to lose pigs than wot it was for them.

"The odd thing about it was that all this time nobody 'ad ever seen the tiger except the tramp, and people sent their children back to school agin and felt safe going about in the daytime till little Charlie Gubbins came running 'ome crying and saying that 'e'd seen it. Next morning a lot more children see it and was afraid to go to school, and people began to wonder wot 'ud happen when all the pigs and poultry was eaten.

"Then Henery Walker see it. We was sitting inside 'ere with scythes, and pitchforks, and such-like things handy, when we see 'im come in without 'is hat. His eyes were staring and 'is hair was all rumpled. He called for a pot o' ale and drank it nearly off, and then 'e sat gasping and 'olding the mug between 'is legs and shaking 'is 'ead at the floor till everybody 'ad left off talking to look at 'im.

" 'Wot's the matter, Henery?' ses one of 'em.

" 'Don't ask me,' ses Henery Walker, with a shiver.

" 'You don't mean to say as 'ow you've seen the tiger?' ses Bill Chambers.

"Henery Walker didn't answer 'im. He got up and walked back'ards and for'ards, still with that frightened look in 'is eyes, and once or twice 'e give such a terrible start that 'e frightened us 'arf out of our wits. Then Bill Chambers took and forced 'im into a chair and give 'im two o' gin and patted 'im on the back, and at last Henery Walker got 'is senses back agin and told us 'ow the tiger 'ad chased 'im all round and round the trees in Plashett's Wood until 'e managed to climb up a tree and escape it. He said the tiger 'ad kept 'im there for over an hour, and then suddenly turned round and bolted off up the road to Wickham.

"It was a merciful escape, and everybody said so except Sam Jones, and 'e asked so many questions that at last Henery Walker asked 'im outright if 'e disbelieved 'is word.

" 'It's all right, Sam,' ses Bob Pretty, as 'ad come in just after Henery Walker. 'I see 'im with the tiger after 'im.'

" 'Wot?' ses Henery, staring at him.

" 'I see it all, Henery,' ses Bob Pretty, 'and I see your pluck. It was all you could do to make up your mind to run from it. I believe if you'd 'ad a fork in your 'and you'd 'ave made a fight for it.'

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"Everybody said 'Bravo!'; but Henery Walker didn't seem to like it at all. He sat still, looking at Bob Pretty, and at last 'e ses, 'Where was you?,' 'e ses.

"'Up another tree, Henery, where you couldn't see me,' ses Bob Pretty, smiling at 'im.

"Henery Walker, wot was drinking some beer, choked a bit, and then 'e put the mug down and went straight off 'ome without saying a word to anybody. I knew 'e didn't like Bob Pretty, but I couldn't see why 'e should be cross about 'is speaking up for 'im as 'e had done, but Bob said as it was 'is modesty, and 'e thought more of 'im for it.

"After that things got worse than ever; the wimmen and children stayed indoors and kept the doors shut, and the men never knew when they went out to work whether they'd come 'ome agin. They used to kiss their children afore they went out of a morning, and their wives too, some of 'em; even men who'd been married for years did. And several more of 'em see the tiger while they was at work, and came running 'ome to tell about it.

"The tiger 'ad been making free with Claybury pigs and such-like for pretty near a week, and nothing 'ad been done to try and catch it, and wot made Claybury men madder than anything else was folks at Wickham saying it was all a mistake, and the tiger 'adn't escaped at all. Even parson, who'd been away for a holiday, said so, and Henery Walker told 'is wife that if she ever set foot inside the church agin 'e'd ask 'is old mother to come and live with 'em.

"It was all very well for parson to talk, but the very night he come back Henery Walker's pig went, and at the same time George Kettle lost five or six ducks.

"He was a quiet man, was George, but when 'is temper was up 'e didn't care for anything. Afore he came to Claybury 'e 'ad been in the Militia, and that evening at the Cauliflower 'e turned up with a gun over 'is shoulder and made a speech, and asked who was game to go with 'im and hunt the tiger. Bill Chambers, who was still grieving after 'is pig, said 'e would, then another man offered, until at last there was seventeen of 'em. Some of 'em 'ad scythes and some pitchforks, and one or two of 'em guns, and it was one o' the finest sights I ever seed when George Kettle stood 'em in rows of four and marched 'em off.

"They went straight up the road, then across Farmer Gill's fields to get to Plashett's wood, where they thought the tiger 'ud most likely be, and the nearer they got to the wood the slower they

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walked. The sun 'ad just gone down and the wood looked very quiet and dark, but John Biggs, the blacksmith, and George Kettle walked in first and the others follered, keeping so close together that Sam Jones 'ad a few words over his shoulder with Bill Chambers about the way 'e was carrying 'is pitchfork.

"Every now and then somebody 'ud say, *'Wot's that!'* and they'd all stop and crowd together and think the time 'ad come, but it 'adn't, and then they'd go on agin, trembling, until they'd walked all round the wood without seeing anything but one or two rabbits. John Biggs and George Kettle wanted for to stay there till it was dark, but the others wouldn't 'ear of it for fear of frightening their wives, and just as it was getting dark they all come tramp, tramp, back to the Cauliflower agin.

"Smith stood 'em 'arf a pint apiece, and they was all outside 'ere fancying theirselves a bit for wot they'd done when we see old man Parsley coming along on two sticks as fast as 'e could come.

" 'Are you brave lads a-looking for the tiger?' he asks.

" 'Yes,' ses John Biggs.

" 'Then 'urry up, for the sake of mercy,' ses old Mr. Parsley, putting 'is 'and on the table and going off into a fit of coughing; 'it's just gone into Bob Pretty's cottage. I was passing and saw it.'

"George Kettle snatches up 'is gun and shouts out to 'is men to come along. Some of 'em was for 'anging back at first, some because they didn't like the tiger and some because they didn't like Bob Pretty, but John Biggs drove 'em in front of 'im like a flock o' sheep and then they gave a cheer and ran after George Kettle, full pelt up the road.

"A few wimmen and children was at their doors as they passed, but they took fright and went indoors screaming. There was a lamp in Bob Pretty's front room, but the door was closed and the 'ouse was silent as the grave.

"George Kettle and the men with the guns went first, then came the pitchforks, and last of all the scythes. Just as George Kettle put 'is 'and on the door he 'eard something moving inside, and the next moment the door opened and there stood Bob Pretty.

" 'What the dickens!' 'e ses, starting back as 'e see the guns and pitchforks pointing at 'im.

" 'Ave you killed it, Bob?' ses George Kettle.

" 'Killed *wot!*' ses Bob Pretty. 'Be careful o' them guns. Take your fingers off the triggers.'

" 'The tiger's in your 'ouse, Bob,' ses George Kettle, in a whisper. ' 'Ave you on'y just come in?'

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" 'Look 'ere,' ses Bob Pretty. 'I don't want any o' your games. You go and play 'em somewhere else.'

" 'It ain't a game,' ses John Biggs; 'the tiger's in your 'ouse and we're going to kill it. Now, then, lads.'

"They all went in in a 'eap, pushing Bob Pretty in front of 'em, till the room was full. Only one man with a scythe got in, and they wouldn't 'ave let 'im in if they'd known. It a'most made 'em forget the tiger for the time.

"George Kettle opened the door wot led into the kitchen, then 'e sprang back with such a shout that the man with the scythe tried to escape, taking Henery Walker along with 'im. George Kettle tried to speak, but couldn't. All 'e could do was to point with 'is finger at Bob Pretty's kitchen—*and Bob Pretty's kitchen was for all the world like a pork butcher's shop*. There was joints o' pork 'anging from the ceiling, two brine tubs as full as they could be, and quite a string of fowls and ducks all ready for market.

" 'Wot d'ye mean by coming into my 'ouse?' ses Bob Pretty, blustering. 'If you don't clear out pretty quick, I'll make you.'

"Nobody answered 'im; they was all examining 'ands o' pork and fowls and such-like.

" 'There's the tiger,' ses Henery Walker, pointing at Bob Pretty; 'that's wot old man Parsley meant.'

" 'Somebody go and fetch Policeman White,' ses a voice.

" 'I wish they would,' ses Bob Pretty. "I'll 'ave the law on you all for breaking into my ' ouse like this, see if I don't.'

" 'Where'd you get all this pork from?' ses the blacksmith.

" 'And them ducks and hins?' ses George Kettle.

" 'That's my bisness,' ses Bob Pretty, staring 'em full in the face. 'I just 'ad a excellent oppertunity offered me of going into the pork and poultry line and I took it. Now, all them as doesn't want to buy any pork or fowls go out o' my house.'

" 'You're a thief, Bob Pretty!' says Henery Walker. 'You stole it all.'

" 'Take care wot you're saying, Henery,' ses Bob Pretty, 'else I'll make you prove your words.'

" 'You stole my pig,' ses Herbert Smith.

" 'Oh, 'ave I?' ses Bob, reaching down a 'and o' pork. 'Is that your pig?' he ses.

" 'It's just about the size o' my pore pig,' ses Herbert Smith.

" 'Very usual size, I call it,' ses Bob Pretty; 'and them ducks and hins very usual-looking hins and ducks, I call 'em, except that they don't grow 'em so fat in these parts. It's a fine thing when a man's

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doing a honest bisness to 'ave these charges brought agin 'im. Dis'eartening, I call it. I don't mind telling you that the tiger got in at my back winder the other night and took arf a pound o' sausage, but you don't 'ear me complaining and going about calling other people thieves.'

" 'Tiger be hanged,' ses Henery Walker, who was almost certain that a loin o' pork on the table was off 'is pig; 'you're the only tiger in these parts.'

" 'Why, Henery,' ses Bob Pretty, 'wot are you a-thinkin' of? Where's your memory? Why, it's on'y two or three days ago you see it and 'ad to get up a tree out of its way.'

"He smiled and shook 'is 'ead at 'im, but Henery Walker on'y kept opening and shutting 'is mouth, and at last 'e went outside without saying a word.

" 'And Sam Jones see it,too,' ses Bob Pretty; 'didn't you, Sam?'

"Sam didn't answer 'im.

" 'And Charlie Hall and Jack Minns and a lot more,' ses Bob; 'besides, I see it myself. I can believe my own eyes, I s'pose?'

" 'We ll have the law on you,' ses Sam Jones.

" 'As *you* like,' ses Bob Pretty; 'but I tell you plain, I've got all the bills for this properly made out, upstairs. And there's pretty near a dozen of you as'll 'ave to go in the box and swear as you saw the tiger. Now, can I sell any of you a bit o' pork afore you go? It's delicious eating, and as soon as you taste it you'll know it wasn't grown in Claybury. Or a pair o' ducks wot 'ave come from two 'undered miles off, and yet look as fresh as if they was on'y killed last night.'

"George Kettle, whose ducks 'ad gone the night afore, went into the front room and walked up and down fighting for 'is breath, but it was all no good; nobody ever got the better o' Bob Pretty. None of 'em could swear to their property, and even when it became known a month later that Bob Pretty and the tramp knew each other, nothing was done. But nobody ever 'eard any more of the tiger from that day to this."

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THE STORY THAT WON



Arthur Tress

The Mid-September Mysterious Photograph contest (photo above) was won by Bill Mosley of Converse, Texas. Honorable mentions go to V. H. Adair of Claremont, California; R. A. Larsen of Farmington Hills, Michigan; H. G. Burns of Michigan City, Indiana; Marsha E. Painter of Goose Creek, South Carolina; K. J. Franks of Wooster, Ohio; Joyce Sellers of Renton, Washington; Wilda V. Gretzinger of Mobile, Alabama; Carol F. Clara of Sarasota, Florida; Caroline Riehm of North Canton, Ohio; and Sue Sieh of Poughkeepsie, New York.

BY THE SEA by Bill Mosley

"He'd have to be a giant," Aldrin said. "Look at the size of it."

The lieutenant was holding what appeared to be a huge badge. The silvery surface in the shape of a crescent moon framed a face in profile with flowing hair. "This pin on the back—it's a foot long—makes me think of jewelry. It's definitely a brooch or a badge or a cameo or a medal or something."

"And it's the only evidence you've found?"

"Well, there were a lot of broken shards around in the sand—looked like seashells at first."

"Seashells?"

"I know that can't be true. So I had Forensics look them over. It's actually the remains of an enormous jar or urn—something like ceramics or pottery. The proverbial blunt instrument."

"And the body?"

"Remarkably well preserved. It's that hill over there. It's about three miles long. Two feet under the crust. Enormous skeleton."

"Half the base is built on that hill."

"I know, sir. The enormity of it astounds me. Here we have a new base, a new police force, our first crime, and not a clue as to who did it. All the evidence is centuries old."

"Lieutenant, would you loosen up! We don't want to find an alien criminal more than three miles tall! It's enough just to find the first evidence of alien life. And we had to come to the moon to do it. By the Sea of Tranquility."

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HITCHCOCK'S
mystery magazine

ORDER FORM

Send to **ALFRED HITCHCOCK MAGAZINE**
Classified Advertising Department/Suite 1401
380 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

$2.35 each additional word
Capitalized words add—40¢ per word
SAVE 15% WITH 3 CONSECUTIVE MONTHS SAME COPY ORDER

DEADLINE: Copy and payment must be in by the 5th day of the third preceding month for issue in which ad is to appear.

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

YOUR NAME_____

FIRM (NAME IN AD)_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ **STATE**_____ **ZIP**_____

PHONE:_____ **DATE:**_____

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_____ Words at $2.35 each $

_____ Capitalized word at .40¢ each _____
Total amount for 1 ad $

15% Savings with 3 Consecutive Months Discount

(a) Multiply one ad total $_____ x 3 = $
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(Example. One 20 word ad $47.00 x 3 months = $141.00 x .85 = $119.85)

$_____ is enclosed for _____ insertion(s) in the _____ issue(s) _____ Heading

(FOR ADDITIONAL WORDS ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET)

(1) **$47.00**	(2) **$47.00**	(3) **$47.00**	(4) **$47.00**	(5) **$47.00**
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(21) **$49.35**	(22) **$51.70**	(23) **$54.05**	(24) **$56.40**	(25) **$58.75**
(26) **$61.10**	(27) **$63.45**	(28) **$65.80**	(29) **$68.15**	(30) **$70.50**

HOW TO COUNT WORDS: Name and address must be included in counting the number of Words in your ad. Each initial or number counts as 1 word: Mark Holly, 380 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017: 7 WORDS: Zip codes are not counted. Phone #: 2 Words. Symbols used as keys are charged for. City or State count as 1 word each.: Garden City, New York: 2 words. Abbreviations such as C.O.D., F.O.B., P.O., U.S.A, 7x10, 35mm count as 1 word. (P.O. Box 145 count as 3 words) Webster's International Unabridged Dictionary will be used as our authority for spelling, compound words, hyphens, abreviations, etc. **Please make checks payable to ALFRED HITCHCOCK MAGAZINE.**

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CLASSIFIED MARKET

AH FEB./84.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK — published 13 times a year. CLASSIFIED AD rate is $2.35 per word — payable in advance — ($47.00 minimum). Capitalized words 40¢ per word additional.

ADDITIONAL INCOME

ASSEMBLE OUR DEVICES (Electronic). We send parts and pay for assembly. Beginners welcome. Write: Electronic Development Lab, Box 1560D, Pinellas Park, Florida 33565.

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BIG Money! Oral health breakthrough product offers incredible opportunity. Direct sales experience helpful, but not necessary. Materials furnished, minimal investment and free sample. For details write: SUITE 153, 2421 WEST PRATT, Chicago, IL 60645.

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MYSTERY/SUSPENSE catalogues $1. Once Upon A Mystery, P.O. Box 31301-B. San Francisco, CA 94131. Also will purchase.

FREE CATALOGUES, hardbacks, paperbacks. Search Service. Detective Mystery Booksearch, Box 15460, Orlando, FL 32808.

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GOOD MONEY! Weekly! Processing Mail! Free Ads, Supplies, Postage! Information? Rush stamped envelope! Foodmaster-DC3, Burnt Hills, NY 12027.

EARN money depositing special coupons at your supermarket(s) for consumer refund reports. Enclose stamped envelope. Consumer Services, B9-C, Orangeburg, NY 10962.

BECOME SELF-EMPLOYED, no experience necessary. GUARANTEED SUCCESS. No inventory to maintain. START IMMEDIATELY. We fill orders on thousands of WARRANTED items. Receive complete wholesale package. FREE 10 DAY EXAMINATION, $25.00 (Refundable). West Coast Associates Ltd., 13562 Vanowen, Suite 18, Van Nuys, California 91405.

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To be included in the next issue please send order and remittance to I. M. Bozoki, Classified Ad Manager, DAVIS PUBLICATIONS, INC., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

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YOU CAN MAKE BIG PROFITS! YOUR OWN BUSINESS. Giftwares, Novelties, Hundreds more below wholesale. Write: Gifthouse, Box 99-DP2, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11229.

$1,000 Weekly Home Business Directory. Free Details. Name and address to: Box 1610-IO, Darien, Connecticut, 06820-1610.

BUY IT WHOLESALE

400,000 BARGAINS Below Wholesale! Many Free! Liquidations...Closeouts...Job Lots...Single Samples. Free Details. Worldwide Bargainhunters, Box 730-IO, Holland, MI 49423.

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NEED CASH? Make a Good Income in the comfort of your home! Information? 25¢ to: Wyant, Box 14490, Cleveland, Ohio 44114.

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RADIO & TELEVISION—Cont'd

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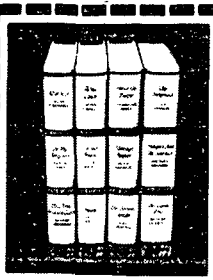
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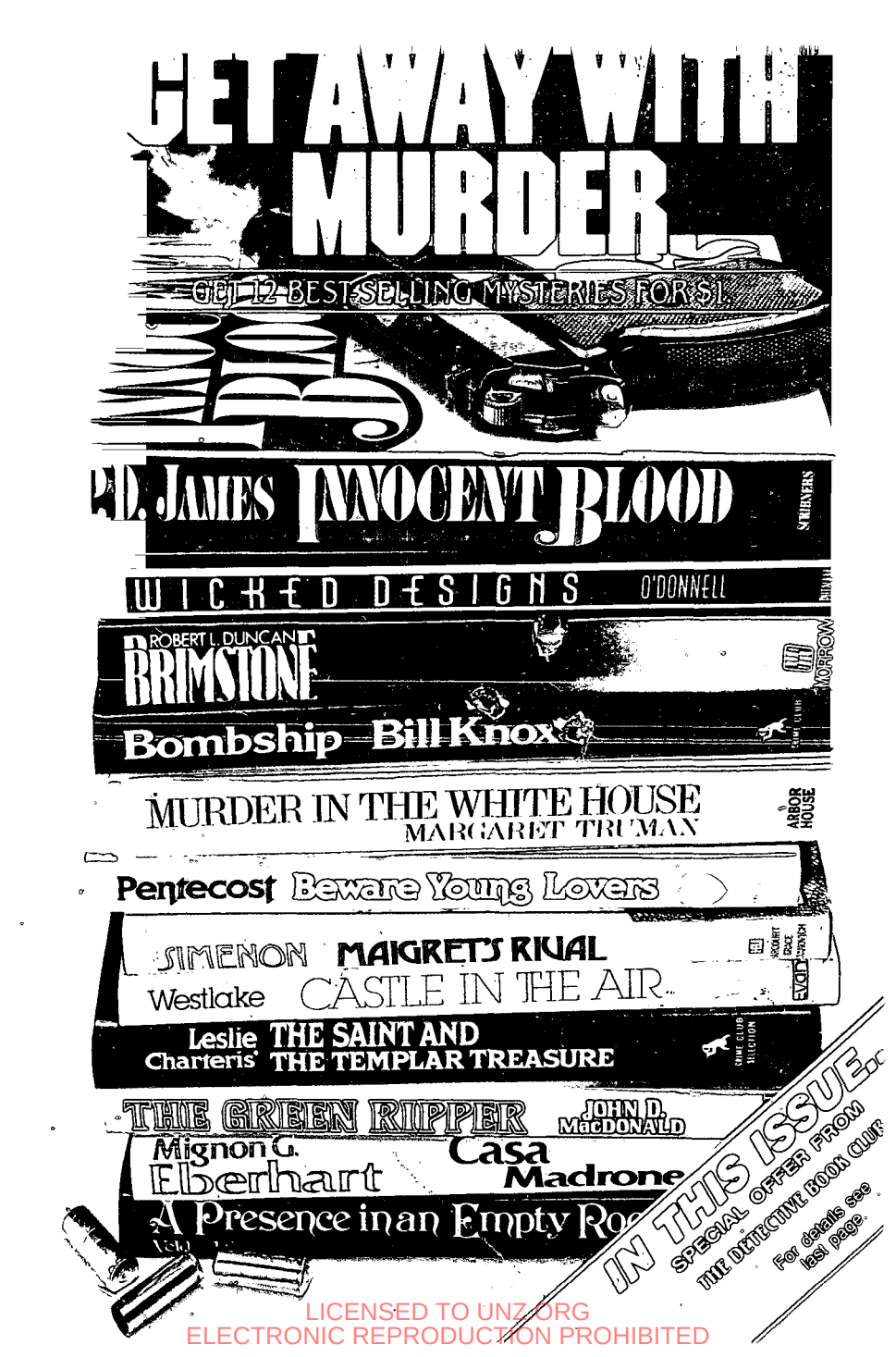
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